Examining Institutional Practices and their effects on Student Success

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Declaration

COMPULSORY DECLARATION
This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Given South Africa's racialized history of access to education, redress efforts targeted at achieving equity in access to universities for students from across racial backgrounds have been well underway for over two decades now. More recently, within the higher education sector, ensuring that access translates into success has become a priority. Drawing on this concern, this research study looks into what constitutes success for previously excluded students at a historically white university. In addition, this research study examines the experiences of these students to uncover factors which contribute to either enabling or constraining their abilities to achieve this much sought after success. The analysis presented in this study arrived at the conclusion that institutional practices continue to entrench various forms of systematic exclusion which in turn significantly affect black students' abilities to achieve success at a historically white university.

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1. Thesis Introduction

1.1. Identification of Problem and Background to Research Study

"Higher education in South Africa was, and still is, as acknowledged in the 2013 White Paper, a low participation system with high attrition" (CHE 2016:7). Statistics show that participation rates for black students in higher education sits at a dismal 16% compared to 53% for whites (CHE Vital Stats 2015:5). More so, dropout rates for black students attending South African universities is said to be three times higher than that of white students, and similarly, graduation rates reflect the same reality (Morreira 2015:2; CHE 2013). Throughput rates further indicate that in any given cohort for both 3 and 4year degree structures, less than half of the total population of students at South African universities complete their degrees in record time with the black and coloured student population being the least likely to graduate on time or if at all (CHE 2016:62-65; Macfarlane 2013). Evidently, access to the higher education system remains highly skewed and in addition succeeding after entry remains a pressing issue. Given such dismal statistics, this research study concerns itself with black students and their aspirations to succeed at university.

This reality begs the need to ask pertinent questions about how black students currently in the higher education system set out to successfully navigate the university spaces in which they find themselves. By way of uncovering and examining the factors cited by students as either enabling or constraining to succeeding at university, it is hoped that this study will be a useful contribution to the redress efforts already underway in South Africa's higher education system.

The establishment of Academic Development Programmes (ADP) in the 1980s within historically white universities (HWU) to challenge the segregatory education policies of the apartheid government was one such significant redress measure (CHE 2013:70). Historically, ADPs were established primarily to tackle issues of differential access plaguing the higher education system. However, overtime the need for access to further translate into success has become a highly prioritized agenda, one that is at the fore of SA's policies and legislation on higher education (Lewin & Mawoyo 2014: 29; 42; Akoojee, Nkomo & Nkomo 2007:390; Scott

2012:32).[1] Currently, ADPs have been institutionalized in several universities as Extended Degree Programmes (EDPs) set out to address the underrepresentation of black students in SA's universities while simultaneously attending to issues of epistemological access and psycho- social support (Lewin & Mawoyo 2014:41-43). Students of colour in SA universities, especially elite research-intensive institutions, are often faced with an academic discourse, a social experience and well-intentioned support structures that neither account for, significantly reflect, seriously accommodate nor attend to the diverse needs of their realities overwhelmingly shaped by racial and socioeconomic factors, among other factors (Mbembe 2015). The nature and effectiveness of available support structures in ensuring a successful experience for black students attending elite universities have become increasingly scrutinized. Similarly, scholars such as Scott (2012) have levelled criticisms against some of the philosophies guiding the redress measures implemented by the aforementioned support structures. At one point describing them as insufficient in some respect and largely misaligned from the systemic character of the issues plaguing SA's institutions of higher education. Several other debates around the inadequacy of support structures available to black students also raised emphatically during the student protests over the past two years[2] reifies the need to examine how black students experience the support structures available to them in SA's universities. Do these support structures contribute to a successful university experience for black students?

In light of the discussion highlighted above this research study embarks on the objective to contribute to these debates by generating in-depth descriptive narratives offered by black students at a HWU about their perspectives on success and their experiences of the support structures available to them at one such elite university. The central research question and the sub-research questions which guided this study are provided below. These questions were informed by the debates highlighted above and are discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

[1] See Council on Higher Education (CHE) 2013. 'A Proposal for Undergraduate Curriculum Reform in South Africa: The Case for a Flexible Degree Structure'.

[2] See RMF Facebook Page for more https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/?ref=page_internal Also see The Daily Vox dedicated segment on Fees Must Fall https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/category/fees-must-fall/

1.2. Research Questions

The central research question is '*What factors contribute to enabling and/or constraining black students' abilities to achieve success at a historically white university*?' This question in turn raised sub-research questions which were used to unpack the central question. They are:

a) What is the nature of black students' experiences at a HWU?
b) What support structures are in place to facilitate an enabling experience for black students at a HWU?
c) How do black students at a HWU define success and to what extent do current support structures enable their definitions of success?

These research questions informed the methodology employed in generating the findings for this study. More so, as briefly mentioned earlier, this study intends to provide rich descriptive narratives in responding to the research questions thus following a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research tools, instruments and techniques for conducting research and analysing data were used in addressing the research questions. A more detailed discussion of the research methodology can be found in Chapter 3 - the research methodology and analysis section. Lastly, although this research study prioritizes empirical evidence, it employs theory to make critical and rigorous sense of the evidence collected to answer the research questions. An integrated theoretical framework including the works of Michel Foucault on *Subject and Power*, Pierre Bourdieu's *Reproduction thesis*, Antonio Gramsci on *Power and Ideology* and Nancy Fraser on *Parity of Participation* offered this theoretical guidance. A more detailed discussion of the theoretical framework can be found in Chapter 3 which follows the literature review.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter opens with an important contextualization of the development of the formal education system in South Africa (SA). This contextualization further allows for a comprehensive insight into what a historically white university (HWU) means. More importantly, these discussions on the HWU and the development of formal education in SA bring to the fore the often insidious exclusionary nature of the formal education system on the continent since its inception till date. Subsequently, a rigorous discussion of more current challenges facing SA's higher education system is provided - this includes challenges relating to access and success, support structures and the commodification of education on SA's higher education system.

2.2. Contextualization and Historical Background

The South African higher education system under colonial rule appears to be largely neglected and as such is neither richly documented nor elaborately utilized in research on higher education as compared to the wealth of research available on the impact of apartheid's policies on the education system in general. This unfortunately posed significant limitations to teasing out vital debates about the nature of universities[3] during colonization. Nevertheless, of common knowledge for most of Africa, and in this case South Africa prior to 1945, is that a superior quality of education was reserved for "settler"[4] children while "slave children" were administered an inferior quality of education, if any (Maree 2006: 5-7). In most cases, slave children were subjected to training which equipped them to efficiently perform labour for their masters (Maree 2006: 5-7). In other instances, education under colonial rule enforced the political and economic imperatives of imperial subordination and subjugation, the result of which enforced schooling and training the subjugated for roles needed to effect domination (Carnoy 1974:3 in Lulat 2005:6; Lulat 2005:4-6). These roles served to further the expansion

[3] Broadly referring to the education system in general

[4] In the South African context, settler denotes a term used to refer to Western Europeans and descendants who arrived in South Africa dating back to the 17th century. See South African History Online: 'History of Slavery and Early Colonisation in South Africa http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-slavery-and-early-colonisation-south-africa ; "Afrikaner" http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/afrikaner

of a capitalist colonial enterprise which largely confined indigenous people the world over to unskilled labour as servants working mostly on farms and/or in households. Semblance of this practice is seen in the apartheid state's passing of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 and the Extension University Act of 1959 which legitimized and established an institutional segregation of access to education and educational facilities along racial as well as ethnic lines (South African History Online 2011). Arguably, as will be later discussed, the apartheid government simply advanced a practice inherited from its predecessors, both equally convinced of its superior objective of bringing civilization and development to the continent under a liberal enlightenment banner of reason and progress.

Lulat (2005:3) challenges this distorted narrative of Africans as "backwardness" by offering examples of various learning institutions (not necessarily formal) which existed in several parts of Africa prior to the continent's forced insertion into Europe's curated global history. For example, institutions of learning such as the *per-ankh*[5] in ancient Egypt and in some ways the *bibliotheca alexandria complex* which sought, above all else, learning purely for the sake of pursuing knowledge, are offered as prime examples (Lulat 2005:3). These examples, among others, challenge the colonial narrative which assumed that Africa was devoid of civilization and was to be brought into the realm of progress and development by Europeans. Instead this narrative shows the colonizers desire for western hegemony of knowledge, more so it indicates that people of the global South were viewed through an anti-humanist lens by the western world with the objective to create "the other" and to cement this other as inferior (Said 2003). Such abhorrent beliefs informed and continue to inform - in ways explicit and subtle, jaundiced institutional decisions, policies and practices adopted in several facets of governance and in the administration of institutions on the continent.[6] The higher education system in South Africa is no exception.

South Africa's higher education landscape spans over three crucial periods; the colonial era, the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era. According to Lalu (2007), the universities which existed prior to the post-apartheid era significantly shaped the South African universities which exist today. Although Lalu (2007) identifies three distinct types of university - i.e. the colonial

[5] Ancient Egyptian (name for) schools.

[6] See Lulat 2005 pg. 213-214 for similar perceptions informed by anthropological explorations which informed policies and practices on education in British colonies.

university, the apartheid university and the post-apartheid university, all spanning different political periods, nonetheless, it appears that certain features have remained unchanged in SA's higher education system. Certain systematic forms of exclusion being tackled presently are similar to the forms of exclusions which existed as far back as the colonial era. During colonial administration "open universities' were established. Open universities such as the University of Cape Town (UCT) were established in the 1800s as colleges, with the objective of cutting the cost of sending young people to study in Europe (Behr & Macmillan 1966:205). According to Lalu, open universities were a product of the colonial liberal ethos which paraded the values of enlightenment within which the logic of racial classification and domination was consolidated (Lalu 2007:53). Essentialist ideas about race were widely purported and scientifically justified at this time, as such a natural order suggesting that Europeans became white and Africans black was consolidated (Eze 2001:31 & Erasmus 2008:170). This racial ordering would in turn solidify a division infused with the enlightenment's civilization rhetoric and race ideology, legitimating a hierarchical ordering of access and restrictions to skilled jobs, institutions, basic amenities and so on.

Goosen, Hall & White (1989:24) argue that, prior to apartheid's policies and its advancement of the already existing racial taxonomy, universities such as UCT and the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) were structurally connected to the black education system, in that "non-whites" had always been admitted to these historically white, open universities. However, these historically white "open" universities, sought to initially admit only white male students, and while the argument may be that UCT from its inception (or its reconstitution as University of Cape Town in 1916) was structurally connected to the "black education system", the black education system at that point consisted of a small elite, while the majority of black people were confined to menial work and believed to only have the intellectual capacity for vocational training (Lulat 2005: 214-215; Goosen, Hall & White 1989:24). Hence, UCT, as a product of a colonial administration and as a liberal English establishment served to, in both overt and covert ways, systematically exclude people of colour[7] from fully accessing and participating in the institution. Systematic forms of exclusion intensified and reached new heights under the apartheid regime, from the often overlooked exclusionary practice of English as the language of instruction at universities and the differential access in respects of accommodation, sport

[7] This is a more progressive term to describe groups historically referred to as "non-white", in the South African context this would include the socially constructed classifications – the African and Coloured population groups and at a later stage those classified as Indian.

and social functions at "open universities (Behr & Macmillan 1966:212) to the implementation of the Extension of University Act of 1959.

The Extension of University Education (EUE) Act prompted a serious realization that the civilization narrative at the core of the enlightenment's rhetoric had been *usurped* [emphasis added] by the apartheid government" (Lalu 2007:53). As a result, the logic of scientific racism was adopted and institutionalized thereafter seeing, South Africa's universities arranged according to a strict perplexing racial and ethnic taxonomy. The EUE Act ensured that the pursuit of knowledge would be subject to the provisions of the law by way of regulating admissions into universities on racial and ethnic grounds (Lalu 2007:47-49). Homelands were designated and enforced by law, and thereafter, separate universities for those classified African were established in the respective designated homelands and for Coloureds and Indians in the peri-urban areas. More so, a permit system was put in place to restrict black students from studying at "open" universities as well as "volks" universities (Goosen, Hall & White 1989:29). At volks universities - which also fall under the HWU category, but are distinguished from their "open" liberal counterparts by their Afrikaner origins and Afrikaans medium-of- instruction - restricting access to those not classified white under apartheid was firmly upheld (Lulat 2005:301). The impact of such apartheid restrictions are still evident in South Africa's universities today, where the low participation rate[8] of black students in South Africa's higher education system, particularly in HWU, remains a pressing concern. The impact and influence of such historical factors on the structuring, functioning and overall state of the university presently cannot be overlooked when examining students' experiences HWU. Unpacking these contextual factors allows for a more critical examination of the institutional issues which impact upon students 'abilities to achieve success.

2.3. Elitist and Exclusionary Issues in South African Higher Education

Since its inception, as has been discussed above, the formal higher education system in SA has fulfilled several exclusionary objectives. It however appears that the state of the current system bears a striking similarity to this exclusionary nature of the past where in place of colonization and apartheid's abhorrent racist project, exclusion in the current education context is instead shrouded in a language of neutrality and meritocracy.

[8] Participation rate refers to the total enrolment headcount over the national population of 20-24 year olds i.e. the official university going age, calculated as a percentage (CHE 2016: IV)

Structural factors tied to a person's social identity and economic background appear to structure either access or exclusion, and more particularly the increasing commercialization of the formal education sector further exacerbates exclusion. Despite this, the current practice in South Africa is one that favours an increased commercial direction; a commodification and corporatisation of the university which is also quite a global phenomenon (Dyson 2015:65). In policy documents, however, higher education is put down as existing to *"address the development needs of society and to provide the labour market with appropriate high-level skills"* (Department of Higher Education in Lange 2012:47. Hence, in South Africa, education - particularly higher education – is conceptualized as simultaneously a private commodity and somewhat of a public good as the definition of development is subject to interpretation. Nonetheless, Paulo Freire has argued that the role of education is to change the world for the better such that critical thinking is prevalent and people are empowered to free themselves from oppression, poverty and injustice (Freire cited in Leibowitz 2012: xiii). This is the sort of development which Lulat (2005) has also argued forms part of the original purpose of education; a public good purpose where the pursuit of learning, sharing and producing knowledge was not subject to controls by a market economy.

In taking a closer look at the state of higher education in South Africa, financial barriers for one, continue to dispel the myth surrounding the neutral and meritocratic beliefs about obtaining a university degree. Studies done in 2016 show that first year tuition fees for a Bachelor of Arts or Social Science degree at a historically white university such as UCT cost no less than R46,000 - this does not include registration fees, deposits, textbooks, accommodation and allowance for living expenses.[9] More expensive degrees such as UCT's Bachelor of Medicine (MBBCh) cost no less than R60, 000 for the first year of study (Grant, 2015). This shows that access to and within institutions of higher education are placed beyond the reach of poor and low income earning families. This, according to Vally (2007) shows that higher education in South Africa has increasingly become commodified in order to serve the market economy. The consequences of such a normative practice of commodifying education has in turn resulted in several harmful practices where universities are turned into business ventures (Dyson, 2015).

[9] See http://www.parent24.com/Learn/Tertiary-education/how-much-does-a-first-year-at-university-cost-20160317; https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hrNSlTVa5I-9h0eqTsnd2KN8U9c5s_cXQWxVKLY1Yvc/edit#gid=0

Most notably, harmful practices in SA such as a drastically decreased State budget for university education resulting in the burden of university costs being heavily shifted from public budget to tuition fees (Vally 2016). Evidently, higher education is increasingly being conceptualized as a private commodity which consequently exacerbates the issue of access to higher education. Bourdieu (1990) and Vally (2007) cautions to the fact that the issue of who has access to these institutions of education is often shrouded in the language of meritocracy distracting from the fact of access being mediated by socio-economic advantage. Moreover, access should be understood in terms of more than just financial access to higher education as has been argued by education philosopher Wally Morrow (Muller 2012: 1-2) As such, epistemological access i.e. access to the goods of the university in terms of academic language and curriculum context as well as symbolic representation i.e. architecture, iconography and symbols of cultural relevance on the university premises are of equal relevance to physical access within the university.

The Fees Must Fall movement (FMF) together with its predecessor, the Rhodes Must Fall movement (RMF) offered critical direction with respect to broadening the debate about access beyond financial terms. These student movements successfully highlighted the complex nature of the challenges facing students of colour at SA's universities. In addition to highlighting that access to higher education in terms of affordability remains a core issue, cultural and symbolic forms of access or lack thereof were equally given considerable attention. For example, the demand to remove the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at UCT represented a strong call to address the exclusionary state of symbolic representation on SA's university campuses (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2016).. The presence of the Rhodes' statue on the university campus represented a condoning of the racist ideologies which Rhodes stood for, it further highlighted the marginal representation of other cultures at the university. Another example of relevance to symbolic representation following the removal of the Rhodes statue in 2015, was the erection a shack on one of UCT's campuses in 2016. "Shackville", as it was tagged, was staged to address the accommodation crisis which particularly affected black students at the university; the shackville protests also intended to "disrupt the current architectural tone of the university" (Sowetan Live, 2015).[10]

[10] http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2016/02/15/cape-town-students-build-shack-complete-with-portable-toilet-at-uct

The importance of representation on campus cannot be overstated as these examples call attention to the effects particular symbolic factors and university structures could have on students' experiences at a HWU. More so, these examples highlight the need for transformation which is cognizant of the different forms of exclusion experienced at HE and as such the multifaceted ways with which the issue of access needs to be addressed.

RMF addressed the important task of unmasking the unequal vision of the world as it manifests itself within HWU (Chaudhuri 2016), an unequal vision of the world predicated on and continuously shaped by a colonial order and ethos. Consequently, the need to prioritize and seriously consider cultural and psycho-social factors arise in such an environment where mass groups of students across the country strongly and publicly 'call out' symbolic forms of exclusion as the RMF movement has done. Mbembe (2015) proposes the need to challenge the status quo where the known is separated from the knower as is evident in SA's universities. Access in and of itself is inadequate, the creation of conditions that will allow black staff and students a sense of belonging and ownership - to say of the university "this is my home" - is most fundamental and this can be done by way of further democratizing access, decolonizing buildings and public spaces among other necessary measures (Mbembe 2015).

With reference to epistemology, the student movements such as RMF and Open Stellenbosch[11] expressed their frustration at the lack of genuine transformation happening in terms of academic discourse and curricular at their different universities. Epistemological access encompasses access to the goods of the university (Muller 2012:1) – it speaks to the methods and practices which could either hinder or enable students' full access to participate in the university academic environment. The Open Stellenbosch collective made up of predominantly black students and staff from the Stellenbosch University (SU) undertook to highlight an important epistemological issue by challenging a language policy experienced to be exclusionary and reminiscent of apartheid policies. According to the Open Stellenbosch collective:

[11]Open Stellenbosch is a movement of predominantly black students and staff at the University who refuse to accept the current pace of transformation. See: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-04-28-op- ed-open-stellenbosch-tackling-language-and-exclusion-at-stellenbosch-university/#

> "Everyday students and staff who do not understand Afrikaans are excluded from learning and participating at Stellenbosch University. As black students we are frequently asked, "Why do you come here if you can't speak Afrikaans?" This question highlights the pervasive and problematic sense of ownership that some have over this University. Stellenbosch - like all universities - is a public institution. This is not an Afrikaans university. It is a South African university which offers instruction in Afrikaans and (to a lesser extent) English (...). These norms help explain why black faculty find Stellenbosch to be a hostile environment that privileges white Afrikaans culture" (Open Stellenbosch Collective 2015).

The issue of exclusion on the basis of language as highlighted by the Open Stellenbosch collective does not stand on its own, it is tied tightly to several historical factors which have institutionalised and continue to legitimate a status quo where the experience of alienation or othering of a particular group of people in various forms is prevalent. This sort of symbolic exclusion is manifested through the privileging of a particular culture in curriculum content, assessment practices, language of academia, heralded symbols on campus among others as highlighted by the collective movements on SA's university campuses (Jawitz 2012:2 in Tanyanyiwa 2014).

The issues discussed above do not in any way represent the full experience of black students at any of SA's university campuses, however the issues discussed are of pressing concern and of relevance to this study's objective to examine factors linked to student success. An in-depth discussion of other possible challenges is beyond the scope of this study, nevertheless a look at support structures in place to remedy some of the issues discussed above will be provided in the next section.

2.4. Support Structures

Access to the university as already argued exists in different forms i.e. in addition to gaining admission into the university, epistemological access and access of a cultural and psycho-social nature have been recognized as being equally as important as equity in numbers (Lewin & Mawoyo 2014; Pym & Kapp 2011:7-8; CHE 2013; Scott 2007). This argument further follows a strong contention that current redress measures fall short of equally prioritising success in outcomes as it does access. Sentiments of this nature are formed on the basis of several studies available through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as well as from the Council on Higher Education (CHE) which continue to uncover the high rates of drop-out and failure evident and ongoing in SA's tertiary institutions. For instance, the most recent throughput rates[12] available for 3-year degrees excluding University of South Africa (UNISA) indicates a 54 percent graduation rate and a 46 percent dropout rate in SA's universities for 2014[13] (CHE 2016:62). For the 4-year degrees, 60 percent of students graduated in 2014 with 40 percent dropping out (CHE 2016:64). These figures strongly suggest that only about half of the students who enter university to study at an undergraduate level complete their education. More so, when considered non-accumulatively, graduation rates for each year[14] sits at an average of about 10 percent, where the national average graduation rate is recorded to be about 15 percent (CHE 2016:61; Lewin and Mawoyo 2014:25).

Such low student success rates coupled with high dropout and slow completion rates intensify the conversation around the need for access to also translate into success. Scott (2012:32) argues that, although the widening of access serves to increase the representation of previously excluded and disadvantaged students into the university, the disappointing reality is that within this low student success rates, the highest attrition rates are recorded among black students which negates the growth in black access as hoped for by the redress measures in place (Scott 2007:19 in Lewin & Mawoyo 2014:27). A turnaround is urgently needed to change the fact that only half of the students participating in SA's universities graduate at all and more so where the graduation rate for black students is half that of whites, and even more disconcerting, only an estimated 5 percent of black youth succeed in any form of higher education in SA (Scott 2012:28).

[12] CHE Vital Stats 2014 released in 2016 provides data for the years 2009 to 2014

[13] Accumulative figures from 2009 to 2014

[14] Between 2009 and 2014

The Academic Development Programmes (ADP) dating back to the 1980s[15] have been argued by many to currently offer the possibility for the much needed turnaround. The ADPs have taken on various functions including offering "preparatory and remedial" courses in its earliest stages to providing educational services informed by the view that the problems facing higher education in South Africa are systemic in nature (Scott 2012:36-38; Luckett 2012:343-344). As such ADPs offer services and support within universities targeted towards addressing issues of a diverse nature, with the objective of achieving both equity of access and equity of outcomes. These goals and objectives are explicitly stated in the 2015 UCT Teaching and Learning Report (2016) for instance; "the promotion of continuing transformation in the student body by developing, implementing and disseminating educational strategies that foster equity of access and outcomes (University of Cape Town 2016:62). In more practical terms, ADPs strive to achieve this objective by offering Extended Degree/Curriculum Programmes (EDP) across all faculties represented within the university (Scott 2012:38; Luckett 2012:343-344). The EDPs are intervention initiatives that incorporate foundational programmes into the course/curriculum structure of predominantly first-year students (CHE 2013:18). These foundational programmes are defined as provision made in the form of "modules, courses or other curricular elements intended to equip *underprepared students* with academic provisions that will enable them to successfully complete a recognized higher education qualification" (DoE 2006 in Scott 2012:35).

Within the paradigm of under-preparedness, the issue of an "articulation gap" was/is given prominence. The "articulation gap" refers to the mismatch in academic demand between the exit levels of secondary education and the level required upon entering higher education (CHE 2013:60). Within this logic, the cause of failure is credited to be the experience of poor schooling and a lack of adequate resources necessary to properly prepare and equip students for the demands of university (Malherbe 1997 in Akoojee, Nkomo & Nkomo 2007:391). The approach to addressing this issue does not differ greatly from the redress measures targeted towards achieving equity in access, as seen in the ADP mandate.

[15] Initially referred to as Academic Support Programmes.

It appears that the ADP takes on a primary responsibility to address under preparedness within the institution by providing foundational courses in addition to other support services in order to cater to the needs of these students[16]. According to Scott (2012) this measure insufficiently addresses the issue as it unfairly places the bulk of the fault on the students and their history of schooling while very little attention is paid to questioning and evaluating how lacking the institutions themselves are in catering to the diverse Qualities and needs of students entering their universities. Similarly, Morreira (2015:4) attributes a significant portion of the blame on the institution as well as what she terms the "deficiency discourse". According to Morreira (2013:3-4) elite universities i.e. HWUs, participate in a practice whereby measures implemented to support and assist these so called "underprepared" students are led by the belief that there is something significantly deficient about the student. Consequently, Morreira argues that what this logic does is place the blame squarely on the perceived shortcomings of the student, whereas elite institutions are not urged to take responsibility for their institutional cultures and practices which reward some and exclude others. Needless to say, the university student experience has never seriously been interrogated as being different for each student. Perhaps this a result of widely held perception of the neutrality and universality of the university experience. This belief often finds legitimacy within the logic of meritocracy which upholds the view that every person is accorded equal opportunity and access to university based solely on the desire and ability to work hard. This is further expanded upon in the theoretical framework section.

In the SA higher education landscape and arguably elsewhere, there is however a strong dissenting view on the rise. A view which suggests an epistemic, social and psycho-social difference in how students of colour, especially in elite institutions, experience the university. It is ultimately a discussion about challenging the current institutional culture as well as paying attention to other agential factors which affect students' abilities to succeed at HWUs.

[16] "Programmes designed by the ADP under CHED had a developmental thrust with a shift from the deficit model of student learning to a generative one that factored in students' psycho-social needs and other adaptation issues". - See more at: http://www.humedu.uct.ac.za/#sthash.qgZHzInP.dpuf"

Lastly, in terms of psycho-social needs and support, the Humanities Education Development Unit (HUM EDU) which runs the education development programme in the Humanities Faculty also offers support in the form of peer-mentorships and life-skills workshops (UCT website).[18] The HUM EDU functions to advance the ADPs objectives which cater predominantly to black students. Eliciting information about students' experiences regarding the interventions offered by the HUM EDU will be useful for gaining a full picture on student success at HWUs.

2.5. Summary

Access remains a primary recurring challenge in South Africa's higher education system as dismal figures continue to indicate that much still needs to be done concerning achieving equity in terms of access. However, without relegating the importance of achieving equity in access, figures also indicate that equity in terms of outcomes and success is an equally important priority. Numerous factors contribute to the current state of high attrition rates and racially skewed participation rates which have roots in several historical factors and more recent social and economic factors. As a result, redress measures which seriously consider the complex systemic nature of these challenges are arguably needed to address black students' experiences in relation to success at SA's HWUs. Support structures catering to the needs of black students are evidently available, however, it is imperative to ascertain to what extent these support structures contribute to enabling black students succeed at HWUs.

[18] http://www.humanities.uct.ac.za/hum/apply/undergraduate/edu

3. Theoretical Framework: M. Foucault, A. Gramsci, P. Bourdieu and N. Fraser

3.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework to be discussed below engages the power of theory to conceptualize, recognize and critically speak to the objective of examining institutional practices as is relevant to black and coloured [19] students at the University of Cape Town. Of particular importance, therefore, are the functioning of power, ideology, capital and culture, particularly in an institutionalized form or environment. It is equally important to study the nature of power and authority *vis a vis* the structuring of society in full acknowledgement of the distinct nature of lived experiences of individuals from different backgrounds at a HWU – i.e. the enduring legacies of both colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. Lastly, a primary interest of this study is to unpack and examine the dominant rhetoric where enormous attention is placed on the importance of achieving success at university. The objective in this respect is hence, firstly, to ascertain whether black students' aspirations in terms of success is congruent with that espoused by the university, given its position as an important state apparatus. More so, this comparison offers an opportunity to discern the degree of influence, if any, that social and institutional structures have on how individuals arrive at their definitions of success.

For this reason, theoretical work on power, culture, social reproduction as devised by thinkers such as Pierre Bourdieu, Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault and Nancy Fraser will be used to arrive at a comprehensively attuned theoretical framework for analysing and examining the aforementioned objectives. Importantly, Nancy Fraser's work on parity of participation provides this research project with the necessary tools needed to think more practically about effective social justice.

3.2. Culture, Power, Ideology

In '*Subject and Power*', Foucault puts together a portion of what is popularly referred to as the 'history of the present'; a host of postulations as to how human actions are organised and invariably the power dynamics at play in ensuring that these actions are in line with particular

[19] Black and Coloured (are official socially constructed categorisations used in South Africa to denote population groups) students on the Humanities Extended Degrees Programme at UCT.

state defined and regulated objectives. By providing an explicit theorization on the *how* of power; how it shapes the conditions in which lives can be lived, Foucault exposes the numerous ways in which individuals are turned into subjects (Li 2007:25; Foucault 1982:786). Arguably, a form of power which applies itself to immediate everyday life is at work, one which imposes a law of truth and conducts individuals to recognise this truth in themselves through self-regulation in addition to other individuals recognising and affirming it in them - this is the mechanism by which power turns individuals into subjects (Foucault 1982:781). Although Foucault cautions that the aim of his work, specifically the essay on *subject and power* has more to do with subjects than it does power, Foucault goes on to provide a strong analysis on the functioning of power in an attempt to unravel the processes of subjectification evident in the directing of individuals' actions in society.

Consequently, subjectification necessitates the examination of the close and complex relationship between subject and power - most especially examining the nature of power, how it works and the instruments employed to ensure subjectification. The most integral instrument is believed to be the state, a political structure dedicated and dutiful in overseeing that the actions of individuals are directed accordingly (Foucault 1982:782-3). This works in accordance with a discourse that pushes a language of abstraction and techniques of individualization to 'govern'. An individualization which seeks to 'categorise the individual by abstraction, mark him by his individuality and attach him to his own identity' (Foucault 1982:782). In addition, the state as a primary instrument of power has at its disposal several State apparatuses such as social, economic and civic institutions like the university. According to Foucault, power is present everywhere, in several relationships, however, all forms of power refer back to the state as the state has increasingly developed strategies to ensure that power, through institutions, is placed under the its control (Foucault 1982:793). More so, important to the subject-power relationship is Foucault's position on the issue of freedom in relation to how power operates. Contrary to the liberal view, Foucault argues that freedom is both a pre-condition as well as a condition for the exercise of power, power functions in such a way that it can only be referred to as an act of power if it is exercised over free subjects, anything outside of this is a different form of domination/subjugation (Foucault 1982:790). This is primarily because the nature of power is such that it is said to exist only in action where it acts upon the actions of individuals who have the 'apparent free will or capability to act' (Foucault 1982:790). The consequences of acting freely in an environment of diffused power, in Foucault's

theorization, is a notion that comes under severe scrutiny, the interplay between consent and power further elucidates the limits of this presumed free will and agency.

Foucault has been critiqued to negate considerable agential possibilities in explicating the dynamics of subjectification, whilst Gramsci's theorization has received commendation in this regard. Gramsci's theorization is that subjectification is a result of the manipulation of consciousness whereby individuals still reserve the right to either accept or reject this subjection in their encounters with the State and other social, political and economic institutions (Gramsci 1986:327 in Daldal 2014:153). To Gramsci, consent is an equally important factor of as it is not overlooked but rather foregrounded in theorization of ideology. Within this, individuals are perceived as inherently agential in such a manner that individualized consent can either be given or withheld in society (Gramsci 1986:327 in Daldal 2014:153). Therefore, there is a recognition whereby individuals are able to make choices which either maintain the status quo or resist structural constrains of power. In addition, Gramsci's 'ideology' aids in providing insight into understanding the reasons and/or justification for actions or lack thereof undertaken by individuals in society. For Gramsci, ideology functions to produce 'common sense' which consequently materialises into conformity or submission - it encompasses a collective upholding of a set of ideas because it is the discourse that follows what is dominant (Gramsci 1986:327 in Daldal 2014:153). This points to the existence of a sort of ideological domination which Gramsci argues for, where the outcome of such a domination is the creation of a 'common sense' congruent with the necessity of the capitalist production system (Daldal 2014:158).

Gramsci further defines common sense as the incoherent set of generally held assumptions and beliefs common to any society while also asserting that ideology is a practical instrument used to organize and direct human action (Gramsci 1986:323 in Daldal 2014:153). Not overlooking that a primary end goal to organising human action is the external human productive capacity for material wealth, i.e. the objectification and subjectification of individuals into productive subjects for labour (Daldal 2014:154; Foucault 1982:777). Both Foucault and Gramsci agree that political power/structure i.e. the State is central and integral to the seemingly identifiable but rather inconspicuous manipulations inherent in the process of subjectification, using ideology as the medium (Foucault 1982:782 & Gramsci 1986:323). Both theorists also recognise that the consciousness of individuals are [being] penetrated to achieve conformity and submission in convincing individuals that their interests and the pursuit of these interests are entirely their own and of their own accord and desire to be well meaning citizens. To ensure

the success of this manipulation project, the [government/state] educates desires and configures habits, aspiration and beliefs (Li 2007:5). Consequently, ideology is merely the medium through which *power* to conduct is exerted. Notwithstanding, Gramsci and Foucault differ on the peculiarities of power; the nature of power and the ways in which it operates to conduct the actions of individuals. The Foucauldian framework does not explicitly employ the concept of ideology in analysing power and subjectification; however central to both Foucault and Gramsci's theorization on the conduct of individuals in society is the contestation of a common belief that free-will and self-interests are arrived at independently by most individuals in society.

In Foucauldian terms, the 'government of individualization'; the acting on the actions of subjects who retain the capacity to act otherwise provides a more thorough explanation (Li 2007:17; Foucault 1982:778). Like Gramsci, Foucault's theorization illuminates the manipulation of consent, in contrast however, Foucault is more convinced that subjects are unaware of these manipulation strategies, in particular because their consent is neither given nor withheld (Li 2007:25). Accordingly, Foucault lays claims which favour the logic that individuals turn themselves into subjects; subjects of health, of sexuality and of acceptable conduct, among other things. In recognizing also that this subjectification is predicated upon a conditioning as well as an education on the particular ways of behaving approved by a discourse consolidated, maintained and regulated by government apparatus. Consequently, the power to conduct and to subject individuals to act as they "ought to" is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding and 'truth'. Individuals, however, believe and often perceive themselves to be self-driven and self-governing, unaware of the manipulation of outcomes and the erosion of choice evident in the 'government of individualization'. In summary, Foucault provides two definitions of a subject, one who is; a) subjected to someone else's control and b) tied to one's own identity by conscience or self- knowledge (Foucault 1982:781/2).

3.3. Combining Ideology and Governmentality

The elaborate theorization on subject and power provided above evidently alludes to the creation, regulation and maintenance of an environment which inconspicuously curtails a presumed possession of free will to act out of self-interest and self-determination. Combining Foucault and Gramsci, as previously mentioned, allows for a more comprehensive examination - it is hoped that it will offer clearer insights into uncovering not only how the

engineering of individual actions works but also why it works in terms of subjectification and manipulation of consent. Foucault argues that the power relations evident in the government of individualization is often successful because it is less confrontational, operating in a way that is both inconspicuously intentional while remaining anonymous (Foucault 1982:789). While in the Gramscian framework, the crux of the analysis lies is in the penetration of consciousness through ideology to persuade consent. Where Foucault's governmentality is better suited to illuminate and examine power's organising effect, its disciplinary attributes, i.e. forms of social control, Gramsci's theorization allows for an analysis which gives room to make sense of the complex interplay between structural power and individualised consent.

Subsequently, the nature of the institution of education as a state apparatus has to be scrutinized to allow for a more holistic picture of the power relations evident within the processes and make-up of the institution. Bourdieu's extensive theorization in this respect is incredibly valuable.

3.4. Bourdieu: Education and Social Reproduction

Bourdieu's theorisations of institutions of education suggest that they are primary sites for the reproduction of inequalities which already exist in society (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990: x-xvii). It should hence come as no surprise that the experience of the university by individuals from various societal stratifications would vastly differ, especially in terms of access; social experience and academic performance within the university. In this way, Bourdieu's fundamental argument about the nature of the university - which will be further discussed below - affirms some of the opinions held by the various student collective movements in SA pertaining to an experience of both physical and symbolic forms of exclusion as discussed in the literature review. In the first and most instructive instance, the key argument here is that power is pervasive in the educational system, so much so that it functions in a concealed manner effecting an obscuring of a process of legitimation which results in the dominance of a particular culture within any institution of education (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). Moreover, Bourdieu's argument further follows that education in and of itself is fraught with endless contradictions, contradictions which seek to illustrate that in addition to an evident dominant culture which dictates the structure and functioning of the educational institution, education in its current form is unequivocally violent. This is because, to begin with, education is positioned, or more accurately imposed, as being the legitimate means by which individuals

can secure upward mobility. Consequently, Bourdieu's views more concretely suggest that the positioning of education in this way, as legitimate, allows it to enjoy relative autonomy and monopoly, and is indicative of the power relations at work in serving the interests of dominant groups in society.

Bourdieu's theories presuppose a neo-Marxist theorisation of society divided into antagonistic groups and classes. It is hence within this frame that the argument of an imposition of culture - an arbitrary imposition of culture by dominant groups is put forward (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990: xvi; xvii). In delineating the processes involved in this imposition, Bourdieu is further able to uncover the arbitrariness of not simply the content of what the scholar refers to as 'cultural reproduction' as it occurs within educational institutions, but more so, the ways in which it this occurs as seemingly neutral and legitimate. Speaking in a particularly narrow sense but speaking rather broadly about the nature of formal education, Bourdieu asserts that the "pedagogic action" (PA) in the dominant position is one which most fully corresponds to the objective interests; material, symbolic and pedagogic, of the dominant groups or classes in society - both by its modes of imposition and by its delimitation of what and whom it imposes (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990:7).

The manifestations in this regard - i.e. the mode of imposition and delimitation, are tied tightly to the violence brought about by the underlying ideology of legitimacy. This is because legitimacy in this instance presupposes an arbitrary nature of power which confers authority and legitimacy upon particular processes, practices or ideas. Consequently, by consolidating education into a system which "functions in the manner of a huge classificatory machine inscribing changes within the purview of the structure, the school helps to make and to impose the legitimate exclusion and inclusion which form the basis of the social order" (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990: x). What then follows is a substantive misrecognition of the role of education in actively creating and perpetuating the social inequalities which it is often believed to exist to ameliorate. Misrecognition which is defined as a process whereby power relations are perceived, not for what they objectively are, but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990:7). Consequently, within the sphere of education, Bourdieu identifies misrecognition as giving rise to, firstly, the misidentification of the objective reality that education, given its monopoly and legitimacy, inflicts considerable

amount of symbolic violence[20]. Symbolic violence is a form of concealed violence which functions with the complicity of agents often because it is deeply ingrained in the minds of agents as legitimate frameworks of meaning and value (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:111). It encompasses a process in which the unequal social order which reproduces itself is masked by arbitrary forms of domination and discrimination. Secondly, it reproduces the dominant culture within society and more so that it reproduces the power relations between groups or classes which comprise society (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990: x, xx, 57; Bourdieu & Passeron 1997:4 in Pajak & Green 2010:394-395). In sum, according to Bourdieu, the entire education system works by way of masking its culpability in actively reproducing the hierarchies which already exist in society. This process of reproduction i.e. cultural reproduction is given much explanatory power within what Bourdieu describes as the 'social reproduction thesis'.

The social reproduction thesis offers an elaborate depiction of the transmission and inculcation processes which go into the reproduction of social inequalities and the preservation of the interests of dominant groups in society. Particularly with reference to institutions of education, an institutional embodiment of the culture of the dominant group is what is arguably reified, and thus it is this embodiment which then works to effect a reproduction strategy in this space (Harker 1990: 86 in Tanyanyiwa 2014:56). Integral to making sense of what an institutionalised dominant culture connotes, particularly within the frame of the reproduction strategy, are the various forms of capital offered and explored in Bourdieu's work. Within economic theory, social life and the experience of access is tightly linked to and, in my view, overstated within the camp of economic capital i.e. material goods, hence, what Bourdieu does is to challenge this position by expanding the various forms of 'capital' which exist to structure belonging, access to and within several "fields" in society. Herein, by expanding the concept of capital in this way, Bourdieu is able to avoid economic theory's reductionist praxis which restricts an understanding of capital merely to material exchange (Bourdieu 1986:46). This expansion gives room to making sense of access and inequality beyond the confines of material

[20] Symbolic violence is described as the result of being subjected to domination by a dominant group whereby the processes involved in achieving domination is concealed. Symbolic violence further suggests that the 'oppressed' often participate and are complicit in their own oppression. Essentially, symbolic violence can be defined as "the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity". See P. Bourdieu and L. Wacquant 2002:167.

goods, therefore making real and tangible the effect of non-material forms of capital i.e. social and cultural forms, which also significantly influence students' experiences in institutions of education. Needless to say, economic capital remains heavily significant, if not the most significant of all the forms of capital because it accords individuals the prerequisites i.e. time, resources, money and so on, to obtain the necessary "habitus" acquired through primary socialisation and validated and rewarded in schools (Bourdieu 1986: 53-54).

"Habitus" refers to the deeply ingrained habits, skills and set of dispositions possessed by an individual which allows or inhibits a successful navigation within a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:16). A field on the other hand is a space of play; a network, or configuration of objective relations between positions, it is also simultaneously a place of conflict and competition (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:97). The interaction between the field and the habitus is marked by a complex process predicated upon the transmission and acquisition of the physical embodiment of habitus, which can be referred to in terms of cultural capital. Consequently, cultural capital can be understood to be the physical embodiment of the habitus (Tzanakis 2011:77). In its most reduced state, cultural capital is a disguised form of economic capital, producing specific effects which also conceal the fact that economic capital is at its root - i.e. evidence of misrecognition (Bourdieu 1986:54). More so, cultural capital in the form of habitus further refers to a set of historical relations deposited within individuals in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action - i.e. embodied states (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:16; Bourdieu 1986:47). Furthermore, cultural capital also exists in an objectified state i.e. in the form of pictures, books, dictionaries etc. often consumed by the individual; as well as in an institutionalized state i.e. in form of qualifications which depict and/or confer certain desirable qualities and properties about an individual's status (Bourdieu 1986:47).

Within the university, cultural capital also manifests in particular forms of desirable etiquettes and symbols in the form of books, pictures, language of instruction and so on, which then culminate in a cultural structure. This cultural structure adversely facilitates a marginalizing experience on account of the dominant cultural capital legitimated within the university space - this occurs when the set of interests and experiences offered and valued by the university differs enormously from the interests and experiences of students from particular backgrounds. In this regard, Bourdieu further argues that these interests and experiences in their embodied

state i.e. habitus, cannot be acquired by way of simply immersing oneself in the dominant culture, instead these skills and dispositions are transmissible parental codes and practices, they are acquired primarily by way of 'familial inheritance' (Tzanakis 2011:76-77; Bourdieu 1986:49). "A precondition for the fast, easy accumulation of cultural capital of every kind of useful cultural capital, starts at the outset, without delay, without wasted time, only for the official offspring of families endowed with strong cultural capital; in this case, the accumulation period covers the whole period of socialization" (Bourdieu 1986:49).

Deductively, therefore, access to the dominant cultural capital is seemingly pre-determined whereby an individual's habitus is understood as a fixed trait, because the acquisition and possession of the dominant habitus is contingent upon the individual's origin i.e. family and social background. Upon closer and more in depth engagement with Bourdieu's theorization about the nature the education system, the consistent argument is that, the institution of education is understood as a social field, an individual's social background ultimately determines their experience of the field as either positively affirming or [violently] exclusionary. Furthermore, the [successful] outcome of an individual's academic engagement within the education institution as a field is dependent upon their possession of the relevant dominant cultural capital i.e. habitus embodied. Therefore, social spaces i.e. fields, arguably produce and maintain particular forms of knowledge, and the implicit familiarity with this knowledge is an uncompromising prerequisite for success in the field (James 2015:100). More importantly, misrecognition functions to conceal these practices by covertly recognising the knowledge within the field as legitimate and universal, consequently devaluing other forms of knowledge and disposition, often rendering these invisible and/or inferior.

Under the next sub-heading, Fraser's work offers a shift from Bourdieu's theorization of 'pre-determined' habitus to unearthing how certain canons and practices permit the institutionalisation of cultural values which then produce inequalities. In the same way that Bourdieu uncovers unequal access in spaces commonly perceived to offer equal opportunities to individuals i.e. universities, Fraser delineates the ways in which misrecognition structures participation in society, while also offering useful strategies and a practical framework to recognise as well as to concretely address structural disadvantage, inequality and social injustice.

3.5. Fraser - Parity of Participation

Similar to Bourdieu, Fraser (2008) provides a comprehensive framework for constituting struggles over distribution, recognition and representation in a way that does not restrict an understanding of inequality to merely an epiphenomenon of unequal distribution of material resources. In particular, like Bourdieu, Fraser makes real and concrete the serious institutionalised cultural aspects with which structural disadvantage is staged and reified in social spaces. Primarily concerned with claims about achieving 'justice' which she defines as 'parity of participation', Fraser (2003) in her original work deepens the conversation around maldistribution and misrecognition in contemporary society which has also been extended to include issues pertaining to (mis) framing and (mis) representation. Although Fraser's work does not specifically focus on the injustices prevalent in the formal education space, her work - particularly on misrecognition and parity of participation - offers this research study the theoretical-philosophical tools needed for the serious engagement that is required to critically think through the pervasive nature of institutionalized exclusion and furthermore the type of practical solutions needed to sufficiently address these injustices.

According to Fraser justice can only be sufficiently realized in terms of 'parity of participation'. Parity of participation seeks the satisfaction of three primary conditions in pursuit of justice; the first of which is the redistribution of material resources such that independence and voice is accorded to participants (Fraser 2003:36). The second condition follows that institutionalized patterns of cultural value express equal respect for all participants and ensure equal opportunity for achieving social esteem (Fraser 2003:36). Fraser then moves on to include a third dimension in seeking redress to structural inequalities, this third dimension takes seriously the impact of globalization in fracturing and deepening the nature of inequality as well as the broadening of parties or institutions notably complicit in and liable for these injustices - it ultimately brings to fore the political dimension of representation (Fraser 2008:15). In a nutshell, Fraser theorizes that justice can only be referred to as achieved when the social arrangements in place allow for all members of society to interact and participate with one another as peers. Hence, equal respect for the equal recognition of all persons as autonomous forms the key metric in assessing if justice is being realized (Armstrong 2009:109).

Building upon the three aforementioned factors linked to injustice, Fraser further recognizes that neoliberal capitalist educational policies and practices, discussed in the literature review,

compound structural issues in ways that an already unequal experience of access and success within educational institutions, is further exacerbated. Therefore, tangible 'transformative' measures present as being the most cogent way forward. This is arguably because a 'transformative approach' in the way that Fraser advocates, is one which promotes a dismantling of entire structures, frames and power systems which keep hierarchies and hegemonies in place even after significant redress measures have been implemented (Fraser 2008:21-23). Rather than seeking redress within the current institutional make-up which either ignores or exacerbates social inequality, preference is given to a transformative approach which seeks to interrogate underlying institutionalised structures that produce and keep unequal power relations intact (Luckett & Shay 2017: 5).[21] With regard to this transformative approach, Fraser's work is evidently informed by a structural understanding of the current social arrangement observable in the social divisions apparent in society. This means that injustice connotes being subject to disadvantage on the basis of a systematic lack of equal access to material resources as well as the institutional attribution of inferior status and the depreciation of certain cultural values and identities (Fraser 2003:36; Fraser 2008:60). The structure of inequality in modern society is hence one which encapsulates class inequalities, status hierarchies and in addition, the restrictive geographical misframing[22] of justice claims (Fraser 2003:69; Fraser 2008:21). In *Scales of Justice 'Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*' (2008) interrogates the common practice of territorializing justice, the author's argument follows that globalization has produced new global arrangements whereby the 'Westphalian' political frame of sovereign nation states/territories has significantly weakened and as such new 'geographical discourses' more attuned to this new reality is needed and necessary to avoid marginalization and further injustices.

Consequently, of importance to this project - that is in addition to uncovering the nature of students' experiences at a historically white university - is the mapping out of concrete methods and avenues with which experiences of injustice can be thoroughly and adequately dealt with.

[21] For example, in '*Reframing the Curriculum: a transformative approach',* Luckett and Shay engage at length with the achievements of UCT's Extended Degree Programme (EDP) as well as its extensive failures which is arguably as a result of the shortcomings of adopting an affirmative approach to address a structural problem. Luckett and Shay ask apt vital questions in critiquing the frame with which structural injustices are dealt with in one of South Africa's prestigious universities. "How realistic was it to expect a marginalised, minimally resourced education improvement project such as the ED to overcome educational effects of three centuries of colonial rule with one year of additional tuition? To what extent can an education development project, working within given frames, solve major socio-political problems whose causes are structural? See Luckett and Shay (2017). 'Reframing the curriculum: a transformative approach'.

Accordingly, then, Fraser proposes that the 'what' of distribution, the 'who' (and among the 'whom') of recognition and the 'how' of representation arguably form the guiding categories in regard to redress measures (Fraser 2003:16-17; Fraser 2008:53-57; Luckett & Shay (2017:11). In speaking particularly about the 'what' of justice, Fraser offers an integrated monist approach in which redistribution, recognition and representation are regarded as being equally weighted and entwined. With such a three dimensional outlook, Fraser displaces the hegemonic position of the redistribution of economic resources as being the most important answer to the "what" in seeking justice. Fraser challenges the false antithesis of decoupling struggles over class inequalities from struggles about institutionalized misrecognition of cultural values and identities (Fraser 2003:13-15). In affirming that neither class subordination nor status subordination can be adequately understood in isolation from the other, misrecognition and maldistribution are seen as analytically distinct but complexly intertwined (Fraser 2007:308; Fraser 2003:69). Hence, only when 'status' and class are considered in tandem can an effective enough approach be devised to achieve radical results.

The status model marks a significant dissociation from Bourdieu's' inherent embodied model of habitus as well as from the currently 'popular' identity politics lens for conceptualising misrecognition. Instead Fraser's Weberian oriented lens is concerned with social status where relations of recognition are distinguished by the lesser respect, esteem and prestige enjoyed relative to other groups in society (Alcoff 2007:255-256, Fraser 2003:14; Fraser 2007:306, 310-312). Here misrecognition is conceived not in relation to distorted identity but instead in relation to institutionalized patterns of cultural norms and values which regulate social interaction in such a way that it impedes parity of participation (Fraser 2003:29; Fraser 2007:310). Furthermore, within the frame of seeking justice, recognition encompasses the who (and among the whom), it seeks to address two levels of justice consisting of first order claims about structural exclusion as discussed above and in addition, meta-level injustices of misframing where certain claimants of justice are unjustly framed (Fraser 2007:14). In this instance of misframing, metal-level injustices occur when claims for justice are, for instance, confined within a particular territorial boundary, thus wrongly excluding some from consideration. Therefore, it speaks to an overlooked practice within normal justice discourse where one is denied access to the platform to press first order justice claims because a particular geographical frame for validating 'worthy' disputants has already been set (Fraser 2007:10;14). On fundamental grounds, by recognising and addressing current common practices around

frame-setting as marginalizing, Fraser's normative theory urges that a democratization of procedures where equal, responsive and ethical representation should be set in motion. Henceforth, Fraser would argue, that claims for redistribution and recognition must be structured from within an active discourse of representation, fundamentally therefore, representation should furnish the stage upon which struggles over distribution and recognition are played out (Fraser 2007:313-314).

3.6. Conclusion

Given the complex nature of the objective of this research project in seeking to ultimately derive answers to the question around the content of institutional practices and the ways in which they affect black student experiences at UCT as a HWU, a holistic theoretical frame combining several key theorists seems most fitting. Where Foucault and Gramsci offer the conceptual tools to engage with the often indistinguishable effects and workings of power on the consciousness of choice in a sharp and meaningful way, Bourdieu offers a clear and concrete theorization about how power works within the education system itself and how it serves the dominant class by legitimating social reproduction. Lastly, Fraser offers a framework, rich and attuned to generating practical measures targeted at addressing structural and institutional injustices effectively.

4. Research Methodology and Methods of Data Collection & Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This is a qualitative research study situated within an interpretivist paradigm which assumes the position that social reality is constructed through the meanings and understandings developed by human actors (Kelly 2016:19-22). The interpretivist paradigm informs a core feature of the qualitative research method which encourages the adoption of an emic perspective to interpret and understand human action in a natural setting rather than explaining or predicting it in a controlled or conditioned environment (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky (2001:53). Consequently, I closely followed the tenets of the interpretivist paradigm in fulfilling the aims of this study. In this chapter, therefore, I discuss how I went about achieving this by firstly reiterating the research questions for this study. I subsequently proceed to provide discussions on the characteristics of a qualitative research approach and then provide justifications for choosing such an approach. Furthermore, a detailed breakdown of the data collection process, the data collection instrument and the chosen method of data analysis will be provided. To conclude this chapter, a brief reflection and/or critique of the process and approach will be provided in addition to a brief summary of the content of this chapter.

4.2. Research Questions

The main research question which guided this study was: *What factors contribute to enabling and/or constraining black students' abilities to achieve success at a historically white university (HWU)?* In unpacking this main research question, the following sub-research questions were used to effectively address the question in addition to being used as a guide for data collection and data analysis:

1. What is the nature of black students' experiences at a HWU?

2. What support structures are in place to facilitate an enabling experience for black students at a HWU?

3. How do black students at a HWU define success and to what extent do current support structures enable their definitions of success?

4.3. Choosing a Qualitative Research Method of Inquiry

It is a primary aim of this research study to elicit black students' perspectives about the several factors which enable and constrain their abilities to achieve success at a HWU, thus this guided and motivated the research methodology employed for this study. Students' interpretations, understandings as well as the meanings they ascribe to success, their experiences at a HWU and their perceived effectiveness or lack thereof of available support structures were integral to choosing the research design which guided the formulation of this study. Consequently, a qualitative research approach provided the research method, design and instruments most fitting to achieve the aim of this study. Qualitative research offers the researcher an approach whereby social phenomenon and everyday social life is understood through the views, meaning and experiences of the actors themselves (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky 2001:53). Thus black students' perspectives on the subject matter of this research study was accorded paramount importance. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011:9), "qualitative research allows a researcher to examine in detail the experiences of people within their natural setting and to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts they live in". More so, within the qualitative research approach the main concern is to understand social action in terms of its specific context rather than attempting to generalize the findings across the board (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky 2001:270). As such, the findings of this research study apply specifically to the cohort of black students interviewed for this research study. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the findings will shed light on how black students' experiences at a HWU, how they understand success and what their experiences with available support structures are.

It was also intended that this research study derive rich and detailed data necessary to provide a nuanced discussion of the key findings. For this reason, research designs essentially provide the framework for the method of data gathering, data collection and data analysis for any research study (Kelly 2016:24). In this research study, semi-structured in-depth interviews which lasted for a duration of over forty minutes were conducted, and research questions inquired in-depth about the nature of black students' experiences, their definitions of success and factors which enable their definitions and other issues of importance to this study. In addition, the case study design emphasizes contextual detail as a general principle in carrying out any research study (Babbie et. al. 2001: 280). It is to be understood that social phenomena are rarely isolated from and unaffected by the factors in the environment in which it is

embedded and in turn studied (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky 2001:282). For this reason, contextual factors such as the impact of apartheid on SA's educational system, the examination of UCT as a HWU and the current socioeconomic climate of extreme inequality in SA, alongside other environmental factors discussed at length under the literature review section, are evidently integral to this research's study of black students' success. Finally, an extensive methodology section is of value where description of access to participants and/or research sites is provided, in addition to information about data collection and analysis which allow readers make judgements about the adequacy of the method and to permit replication" (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky 2001:282). In sum therefore, the provision of a meticulous but contextualised methodology section for any research study is believed to aid in effective conceptualization.

Lastly, an adherence to a conceptual framework was followed, and this in turn aided in a systematic structuring of this study (Babbie et. al. 2001:282). A conceptual framework entails stating the purpose of the study, offering the research questions and finally carefully identifying and defining key concepts (Babbie et. al. 2001:282). For this study, the purpose of the research is threefold: firstly, focus was given to black students' experiences at a HWU, secondly, providing an exposition of their aspirations of success and lastly gaining insight into the nature and effectiveness of existing support structures. A more detailed outline of the purposes for this study can be found in Chapter 1 alongside the research questions which is also provided in this chapter. Conceptual frameworks are deemed useful in providing guidance during early stages of the research process, however they also provide useful guiding principles which also assist in structuring the data collection process (Babbie et. al. 2001:282). To enrich and compliment the case study design, an approach to analysing data in line with the interpretivist paradigm was adopted. More specifically, the approach I adopted to collect and analyse data for this research study falls within an inductive and then deductive data analysis process. Within this approach, patterns and themes are built from the bottom up and in the case of this research study it was also guided by the research questions (Creswell 2014:186). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on using rigorous data coding procedures to inductively generate concepts or theory (Douglas 2003:47). Lastly, the approach adopted for this research study involved focusing on conceptual constructs which emerged from the data rather than using data to verify a certain pre-formulated hypothesis. I now present the data collection process and the method of data gathering, thereafter a more detailed discussion of the data analysis approach is provided.

4.4. The Data Collection Process

The data collection process involved obtaining ethical clearance, securing my sample population as well as working with the appropriate qualitative research tools most beneficial to my research objectives.

4.4.1. Ethical Issues and Consideration

I presented and subsequently submitted a research proposal to the Department of Sociology, Humanities Faculty UCT which resulted in the approval of the research project and thereafter the receipt of ethical clearance thereafter in December 2015 by the Research Ethics Committee, Sociology. The ethical clearance[23] approved a non-probability sampling procedure and deemed the nature and content of the research ethical, posing little to no significant physical or emotional harm to the participants of this study. During the entire data collection process, I was cognisant of adhering to ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, rights of the participants to anonymity and confidentiality, rights to withdraw from the study at any given time and a general consideration of participants needs, values and wellbeing. An informed consent form binding me as the researcher to these important ethical research principles were signed by both parties.

Subsequent to gaining ethical clearance for this research study, I set out to make arrangements with a Cape Town based non-governmental organisation which I worked with on this project - the South African Education and Environment Project (SAEP). SAEP provides support to a number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds at UCT and as such with their assistance I was to secure a sample population from the database of students they support. The initial stage of contacting SAEP students to enlist their voluntary participation in the research project was arduous and largely unfruitful as a result of the disruptions, protests and shutdowns on UCT campuses in the second semester of 2016. This posed a significant setback to the data collection process and my dissertation timeline. Nevertheless, through the assistance of the Faculty of Humanities Education Development Unit (HUMEDU) at UCT - another party which I received support from during the course of this research study - I was given access to another database of students from which I solicited more voluntary participation for the study. In sum, the HUMEDU and the SAEP offered significant assistance in securing the sample population from which I initiated requests to students soliciting their voluntary participation in this research study. As such, the participants interviewed for this study were students supported by either the

HUMEDU or SAEP, and in some cases supported by both.

4.4.2. Background on HUMEDU & SAEP

The faculty of Humanities Education Development Unit (HUMEDU) caters to previously disadvantaged students who demonstrate the potential to succeed at university level (Humanities ED Guide 2015:8). The HUMEDU was established to run and oversee the provision of the Humanities Extended Degrees Programme which admits students who do not meet the minimum requirements for admission into any of UCT's Humanities general degrees. Through providing foundational courses, mentorship, extra tutorials and workshops over a four-year time period, the HUMEDU attends to both academic and psychosocial needs of students in their care (*UCT Humanities EDU website).*[24] Factors relating to supervision and financial support explain my own involvement with the HUMEDU which dates back to 2014 during my Honours year of study. From an initial Honours project where I looked into the *experiences of failure of students on a humanities extended degree programme* to currently e*xamining institutional practices and their effects on student success*, my research interests and that of the HUMEDU aligned to allow for meaningful collaboration. Hence, given my long-standing relationship with the unit, as well the benefits this research study holds for the unit, the facilitation of access to students supported by this faculty-wide established support unit was a favourable and logical step.

The South African Education and Environment Project (SAEP) is a non-governmental organisation based in Cape Town committed to supporting children and youth from South African townships through every level of their academic careers (Anderson, Azari, Van Wyk & Florian 2014:3). Spread across the Western province, SAEP partners with UCT and other tertiary institutions as a community organisation seeking to work with 'experts' on research projects of benefit to the university, their organisation and most importantly their students (The South African Education and Environment Project).[25] In the case of UCT, the SAEP's relationship with the university is facilitated by UCT Knowledge Co-op, a social responsive wing at UCT which provides channels for students and academics to work with various communities to tackle developmental issues (UCT Knowledge Co-op).[26]

[24] http://www.humedu.uct.ac.za/

The Knowledge Co-op does this by ensuring community partners access to university expertise, knowledge, skills and resources. I approached the Knowledge Co-op to offer my skills to address questions concerning students' needs and challenges at university. I was subsequently put in communication with the SAEP to work on a joint research project in collaboration with the HUMEDU. My partnership with the SAEP on this research project resulted in access to UCT Humanities students in their care, access to some of their resources e.g. office space and library when needed, and a scholarship towards the successful completion of this project.

I shall now move on to discuss the sampling procedure and subsequently the interview process i.e. the data collection instrument.

4.4.3. Sampling Procedure

Purposive non-probability sampling refers to a sampling method that is deliberate and directed at an inclusive criteria of importance to the research question, rather than the acquisition of a sample at random (Babbie et. al. 2001:286). Non-probability sampling allows for the selection of a sample based on a set of criteria usually arrived at by paying attention to the characteristics of the population of the research study's subject matter (Richie, Lewis and Elam 2003: 78). Hence, the researcher is often allowed to select the sample i.e. individual(s)/group(s)/site(s) with the purposeful intention to enable detailed examination of the research problem in collaboration with the group affected by the problem or area of interest. This type of sampling approach is argued to be most appropriate for qualitative studies where a small scale sample is more desirable for an in-depth study of the research problem (Babbie et. al. 2001:288).

The selection of participants for this study was guided by numerous factors. Firstly, in taking into account the vital historical component of this research study, a key criterion was for participants to currently be enrolled students at a historically white university - in this case UCT. Secondly, also linked to the historical element, the research problem foregrounds the dismal state of higher education in South Africa where statistics reveal that the dropout rate for black and Coloured students attending South African universities is three times higher than that of white students, and similarly, graduation rates reflect the same reality (Morreira 2015:2; CHE 2013).

[25] http://www.saep.org/programmes/at-a-glance/

[26] http://www.knowledgeco-op.uct.ac.za/kco/about

Thus, another key criterion was to enlist participants who belonged to either of these two South African population groups. Lastly, given that one of the purposes of this research study is to gain insight into existing support structures, the final criterion was for participants to be part of a university established and/or recognised support programme. This in turn necessitated and explains the relevance of my partnership with HUMEDU and SAEP.

4.5. The Data Collection Process: Instrument and Strategy

Data collection tools in qualitative research include, but are not limited to participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis and other visual methods (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011; Marshall and Rossman 1999). Qualitative research can evidently be conducted utilizing a variety of data collection tools or by solely relying on one tool depending on the objective of the research and time constraints. For the purpose of this study, individually audio-recorded semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used as the sole tool for data collection. Semi-structured interviews offer researchers the balance of flexibility to incorporate open-ended questions and to generate more questions through careful probing during the course of the interviews, all the while encouraging the gathering of structured and focused qualitative data (Punch 2005). Interviews in general are an incredibly flexible and versatile qualitative data collection tool, they are however not without challenges and limitations.

Compared to traditional telephonic surveys and other noncontact forms of interviewing, face to face interviews yield relatively better responses (Babbie et. al. 2001:256-262). This constitutes one of the many advantages of employing face-to-face interviews compared to data collection tools such as questionnaires or surveys. Nevertheless, a significant challenge in this regard arises when attempting to secure participation via phone-calls or emails to potential participants. For this research study, I made phone calls and sent out emails to a total of 15 students, of which, I received a response from 11 students whereby only 9 students agreed to participate. It was my experience, however, that after securing voluntary participation and arranging a time and choosing a venue in collaboration with the participants that all 9 of the students showed up for the interview.

Thereafter, upon commencement of the interview, participants were given substantial information about the research project, they were informed that the interview would be audio-recorded, to which they all agreed and subsequently a consent form was carefully read, understood and signed by both participant and researcher. Face-to-face semi-structured interview was chosen as the only data collection tool due to its relatively high response rate and more so, as a result of the disruptions and shutdown in 2016, which already affected the initial stage of contacting students and securing venues on campus for interviews, there was limited time available to make use of any other data collection tool.

Conducting a successful face-to-face semi-structured interview requires an interview guide and/or schedule which aids effective time-management and ensures that both researcher and participant remain on track with the interview questions. For this reason, I devised a structured interview guide[27] containing open-ended questions grouped under the following sub-headings: (a) bio-data (b) opinions on the current state of the university (c) support structures and (d) success, power and agency. These subheadings guided the direction the interviews would take and, similar to a qualitative research questionnaire, aided in elucidating information of relevance to the research questions. On average, the interview sessions lasted for forty to forty-five minutes. General rule guidelines such as avoiding vague questions, leading questions and generally paying serious attention to how questions are worded were adhered to. Following this process helped to minimize data contamination and researcher bias (Mishler 1991:43).

Lastly, minimizing researcher bias and ensuring the reliability, credibility and trustworthiness of data collected is an essential task to be undertaken by all researchers. Mishler (1991:48) offers several measures including but not limited to triangulation, by making use of multiple tools for data collection, peer reviews, member checks/participant feedback as well as audio-tape recording for meticulous transcribing. For several reasons, owing particularly to factoring in the aims of the study, in addition to the tumultuous university climate brought about by student protests last year, the method of returning transcribed and/or analysed data to participants to receive feedback was chosen.

[27] Appendix C.

This assesses and verifies the trustworthiness of the data and is also commonly referred to as participant feedback or member checking (Doyle
2007). In this case, the prolonged shutdown of university campuses last year significantly restricted participants' access to internet services and as such rendered this preferred participant feedback method unattainable. However, the findings of this study were presented to the SAEP team in 2017, prior to submission of this dissertation, where participants were invited to engage and/or object to the findings if necessary. Consequently, I was unable to use individual participant feedback on my transcriptions but instead relied on the benefits of carefully transcribing all the audio-recorded interviews myself. Although transcribing audio- recordings can be tedious, it offers researchers a good way to arrive at a credible representation of the conversation which transpired between participant and researcher during the course of the interviews (Babbie et. al. 2001). Furthermore, I made a point to take notes of gestures, facial expressions and general body movements during the course of the interview further increased the representation and in turn credibility of the I data collected for this research study.

Data analysis follows the description of the data collection process. In the next section I discuss the method of data analysis employed to arrive at the findings for this study.

4.6. Data Analysis

Consistent with the adopted inductive approach is the Miles and Huberman (1994) procedure for data analysis. These authors provide prescriptive step by step guidance on how to trace out lawful and stable relationships among social phenomena based on the regularities which link the phenomena together (Miles and Huberman 1994:4). For Miles and Huberman (1994:10), the important steps to analysing data include; data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. The initial stage of data analysis involves the process of condensing and sorting out the data. To do this I began with a list of start codes i.e. general themes/headings broadly informed by the literature review process, in addition to these themes, I also made use of the themes which emerged while spending extensive time studying and transcribing the interviews. During this process of sorting out the data, I essentially endeavoured to code every aspect of the data so as to work with clusters that were sharply related to the research questions. Following this process, I continued with more advanced coding which involved refining my start list by paying attention to the occurrence of common themes which in turn aided the identification of relationships between these themes.

At this stage the data display process had begun, and by making use of a qualitative research software package Nvivo10, I was able to create parent and child nodes which further aided in visually mapping out emerging patterns which later served to establish regularities. The final stage of coding is the most critical stage which establishes regularities - consequently arriving at conclusions and verifications. At this final stage, I was able to comfortably manoeuvre through the organised data in NVivo, highlight key emergent themes, discern distinctions between seemingly overlapping codes and eventually draw out cogent conclusions. The themes which housed the key conceptual categories which emerged from the data analysis process included; 'Experience of the University', 'Interventions and Support Mechanisms', 'Social and Cultural Factors', 'Social or Political Agency', 'Structural Factors - Current and Historical', 'The Essence of a University Degree', 'Thriving' and 'Transitioning and Adjusting'. A copy of the Nvivo codes with all the nodes created is available in Appendix D, further discussion about the content of these categories i.e. the findings, are provided in Chapter 5.

In sum, the data analysis process involved reflecting on the literature review and the theoretical framework to develop the nodes i.e. conceptual categories, which in turn aided in providing the discussion chapters on findings and analysis.

4.6. Limitations, Reflexivity and Conclusion.

In this chapter, the extensive research design and research methods followed in this study have been discussed. I have comprehensively discussed the nature of qualitative research and offered justifications for the approach adopted. I offered insight into the data collection process, the instrument used for data collection as well as the method of data analysis employed. More concretely, I discussed situating this research study within the broader principles of an interpretivist paradigm which recognises the difficulty in separating the worlds of the objects of study from that of the researcher. As such, arriving at a completely objective examination of the subject matter is seemingly unattainable, instead I suggest that being aware of this fact as well as taking necessary steps to minimize researcher bias, to eliminate preconceptions and to avoid arriving at premature judgements of the possible outcomes of the study is the most tenable alternative solution. Although faced with these challenges, the tools available within the qualitative paradigm remain the most effective for seeking in-depth descriptive findings.

5. Key Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter contains key findings pulled from the rich qualitative data collected during the course of interviewing 9 black students at a historically white university (HWU) - UCT. The sub-research questions are used as a structural guideline in presenting the key findings and in turn these findings are synthesized to address the central research question.

5.2. What is the nature of black students' experiences at a HWU?

Different aspects of university life present various types of experiences for black students. Socially, academically and otherwise, findings show that black students encounter challenges at UCT which significantly shape the nature of their experiences at the university. Nevertheless, in spite of these challenges, participants also shared positive remarks about UCT and some of the rewarding aspects of studying at UCT.

5.2.1. Experiential Dissonance

The nature of students' experiences at a HWU encompassed complex issues pertaining to academic demands, cultural and academic capital, experiential dissonance and other issues regarding social identity and its impact on student experiences at UCT. The findings show that factors relating to "experiential dissonance" and *"capital"* feature quite prominently in providing insight about the nature of participants' experiences. Experiential dissonance as used here should be understood as the evidence of a noticeable disconnect between students' needs and expectations of the university and what is catered for and available at the university. It appears that many black students view UCT as a peculiarly unwelcoming environment where they are shouldered with a burden to adjust and/or assimilate in order to perform adequately as a UCT student. Participants offered a plethora of responses which affirm this point, one participant went as far as referring to UCT as a new society; "*Yeah I think for me it is that because we [are] in this new society now which is like UCT society umm [and] we tend to be lost"*. Evidently, experiential dissonance also entails an experience of feeling lost, out of place and at most alienated. "*I don't think it is a place for me man, I don't feel a sense of belonging to this place, I don't think ahh because what this place tries to do to me each and every day, it tries to pull me towards this place instead of looking at my own suffering and stuff that I need*

to get to. So in a way I feel like it is making me different from what I think I am, from who I think I am so with the whole mind-set the way I think now in this environment you get to feel excluded in a way". This is another quote which further affirms this point that these black students experience the UCT environment as often exclusionary, and in many ways disconnected from their lived experiences. UCT as a university is ultimately viewed by these black students as a place where not enough is done to prioritize their backgrounds, their expectations and the needs of their communities.

"It [UCT] doesn't speak to the history and what it means today, for everyone else who is not white".

Participants' social identities, as explicated through analysing experiential dissonance, form the basis upon which they feel academically and culturally unaccounted for at the university. Consequently, the issues addressed under experiential dissonance largely speak to the social nature of students' experiences at UCT which in turn influence the experiences they have in other areas of university life. In the area of academics for instance, the findings showed that black students feel generally confident about their competence and ability to work hard and excel at their respective degree programmes. For example, one participant stated that "*I think my problem with UCT has never been with academics*", while another relayed that "*when it comes to tests I do very great".* However, despite all 9 students expressing confidence in their ability to excel academically, a prominent factor stated by these students as constraining their ability to fully participate academically at UCT is the total exclusion of all other official SA languages and the dominance of the English language as the language of instruction

5.2.2. Academic Challenges

The dominance of English language as the only language of instruction adds another layer to the experience of exclusion and alienation which black students are subjected to at UCT. The findings showed that language is a symbolic indicator of access or lack thereof to the dominant culture of the university. Majority of participants relayed that their familiarity with the English language is secondary i.e. that English is a second, third and even a fourth language, and as such they experience considerable difficulty in using it in such a rigid academic manner. What this suggests is that second and third English language speakers are unfairly put at a disadvantage, and students feel strongly that this is an unjust situation: "*even during the break, if you are a first language English speaker, not just in class but like outside the environment, or at home*

and everywhere else then it is practice for you, it is learning [..] Here also this writing in English has to be proper and that is also what has been killing me the most". Another participant stated that "*it was a big change, it was very different from my school, the use of English in every lecture so it was like even if you knew something you would be afraid to say in class because you don't know how people are gonna take your accent, how they are going to take your answers*". The dissonance in this regard is glaring as it appears that UCT does not cater to the diverse linguistic needs and strengths of its diverse student body. The implication of this language issue is such that students who do not have a strong command of the English language have to work twice as hard as other students who do. This evidently fractures the ideal environment where all students should be given an equal chance at excelling at university. Instead, the reality is one where like one participant recounted "*I had to cover the space, I had to make up the fact that I didn't go to an English school*". While academic writing particularly essay writing, referencing and in general familiarising oneself with the academic content and demands of particular courses were cited as significantly challenging mostly during the first year of study, a language of instruction issue evidently compounds students' abilities to be equal participants at a HWU such as UCT. Nevertheless, despite the prevalence of the aforementioned challenges, findings showed that black students at UCT also feel positively about a range of other factors and experiences.

5.2.3. Remarks on Thriving and Positive Experiences at the University

For these black students, thriving at a HWU involves their recognition of being able to forge ahead and be agents capable of several accomplishments same as their colleagues who are neither black students at UCT nor on the EDP. Hence, as evident in the findings, a number of these students spoke about the fact that they are able to thrive and/or develop thriving mechanisms which have successfully worked for them despite the structural challenges that they are faced with. Remarks such as *"...I managed and as time [went] by I learned how the system worked, what you have to do, what is required of you by UCT". "...When I came here, I managed to make a lot of friends, I managed to create a circle of these people that lived like me when they were back in the communities even if they are not from my community".* What these findings reveal is the basic understanding of students as inherently capable and agential even in circumstances that might be stigmatizing or challenging.

In terms of positive remarks, participants relayed their gratitude for the availability of numerous resources on campus, they spoke of their appreciation for the infrastructure and technology in place at UCT. Participants further commended UCT for the availability of certain support structures such as the writing centre which they find useful and of necessity, especially given the language issue. One participant mentioned that the writing centre offered her the assistance she needed when she had to work harder to compensate for UCT's failure to accommodate other languages besides English: "*there are writing centres, it is just that I had to work harder than anyone to cover that, to cover the lessons… At home, like speaking English at home, so like I had to work really hard to cover that space because here it is not just about answering the right question, it is also about are you saying it the right way, how you saying it like, it is about how you are arguing it.".* Other participants relayed appreciation for facilities such as the libraries and the computer laboratories, "*they have all the supporting structures that I need like they have libraries, they have like labs they open for 24 hours and for me that's like enough for you to study [...] even in res like they have those spaces that you can go and study and yea".* Two other key features of UCT which participants find indispensable are student residences and the availability of academic support structures. "*I think I appreciate the fact that at UCT, there is accommodation, like I mean I won't be able to go back and forth, well I will be able but it will be even harder for me because it was already hard. It is already hard to study here so it will be even harder if I had to go back and forth like attending classes".* Concerning academic structures, participants find the existence of the HUMEDU as well as the assistance of the SAEP to be incredibly useful and of tremendous benefit. "*Academic structures uh EDU your SAEP, they try so hard to assist me and stuff and I thank them [...] I get to be supported also like in terms of academically in that midst of trying to find where I stand and stuff I get that support academically which is very convenient and helpful to me so things like EDU, SAEP yooh".*

The above remarks indicate that students are aware that they are agents, and more so act on their agential abilities to, for instance, make use of the resources available to them, oftentimes to counteract the ways in which they are underserved by the institution. These remarks also show that there are structures and mechanisms in place at the institution which help facilitate a positive environment for students. The discussion which follows uncovers the structures and mechanisms in place to assist black students in tackling the challenges they face at UCT.

5.3. What support structures are in place to facilitate an enabling experience for black students at a HWU?

A plethora of different forms of support structures were uncovered as existing and available to students at UCT. However, the most prominent support structures uncovered focused on academic support. The findings showed that these students generally make more use of existing academic support structures despite being quite knowledgeable about the various forms of support structures available at UCT. These available support structures, some of their unintended consequences as well as the effectiveness thereof are subsequently discussed.

5.3.1. Diverse Forms of Available Support Structures

The nature of support structures available at UCT range from financial assistance, psychosocial support and a general catering to the improvement of soft skills e.g. linguistic skills, analytical skills and overall writing skills. Provided below are quotes from participants highlighting the different forms of support structures available:

1. *In some of my departments the people are more umm like we want you to do well to get through and we have all these things in place for you to get through to make sure you can get good marks and you can land these* ***scholarships***[28] *so maybe like umm in our [anthro/politics] department there's this* ***writing tutors*** *that help you to write better essays and things like that.*

2. *You can always go to the* ***EDP tut*** *uhh sometimes you will be dealing with concepts in one stream, one course and then you go to your* ***EDP courses*** *and it is the same concepts as well and they link it together and everything makes more sense and really helps you.*

3. *Then I heard that we gonna get R3700... Or R3000 what for a book allowance, I was so excited for* ***Financial Aid.***

4. *I get support financially from* ***SAEP*** *and they also support me like, well last year I was part of their* ***mentorship program*** *and it was like sort of helpful...*

5. *I think like UCT has the tools that I need to succeed because there's writing centres, there's tutors, there's um um what's this thing called down there in near Forest hill? Interviewer: the wellness center? Yes,* ***the wellness center****, there are also, you can also consult lectures, I think it is just lies within a person whether to use like the facilities.*

[28] Support structures and mechanisms are highlighted in bold.

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The findings provided above is a key summary of the range of support structures mentioned by participants, whether participants found them useful or not, they appear to have knowledge of their availability. Subsequently, I shall now proceed to offer a more detailed discussion of participants' perspectives about the aforementioned support structures as well as their perceived effectiveness or lack thereof.

5.3.2. Stigma and Othering

During the initial stage of the coding process, responses about support structures showed that participants held diverse views about the structures in place, however, a significant amount of participants remarked about feeling "targeted", which suggested an experience of othering and stigmatization. While preliminary literature review did not focus on highlighting issues pertaining to othering and stigma in relation to support structures, a further review of literature was conducted in response to the emergence of these issues from the data. Available literature on stigma and othering showed that an unforeseen consequence of a focus on "disadvantaged" students by the EDP access programs for instance, is the unwitting perpetuation of stereotypes (Mann 2008; Swail 2002 in Pym and Kapp 2011:1-2). According to Pym and Kapp (2011:2) the history of academic development is seen to exacerbate students' experiences of being 'othered' and marginalized. The findings for this research study uncovered that this argument carried much weight for a significant number of participants. Here is a quote validating this claim: "*I think umm, what I think yeah the program comes from very great intentions but it really does inform like the stigmas because yeah you wouldn't find a white person from whatever in there, in the program".* Two other different participants stated the following: "W*ell EDU has been associated with okay you didn't, you weren't good enough at school, you come from a poor background and whatever so for me it was like oh God I am that girl from the townships who didn't do well at school".* The second participant comments on how limiting the identities imposed upon them as EDP students are, evidently being critical about the negative association made between socioeconomic background and being an EDP student: "*umm it makes me feel bad because umm one, there's like umm people that are in the EDP, they are people who come from "these" backgrounds [..] but this is true but can we maybe just don't look at it that way because we, I don't know, but yeah I think there is a way that people can look at it like differently because we are not just that, yeah there is more to us than that".*

A third of the participants experience the EDP as stigmatizing, this experience of stigmatization was uncovered to stem from the inferiorization of the high schools they attended and in general the backgrounds participants come from. Majority of the participants also conveyed feeling that being an EDP student often wrongly defines who they are and how their peers perceive of them. However, many of the participants disagreed that being on the EDP stream means that they are inferior, academically or otherwise. Participants in fact find the EDU[29] to be helpful, there was a general consensus among the participants that they find available support structures, including the EDP, to be effective and instrumental to achieving good academic performance at UCT.

5.3.3. Examining Available Support Structures

According to the findings available support structures at the university include; Financial Aid, the Writing Centre, academic and psycho-social support from SAEP and EDU, the Wellness Centre, the Libraries and lastly the Computer Laboratories. A discussion of the effectiveness of these structures is provided below.

- **Financial Support**

Firstly, many of the participants mentioned that the financial support which they receive through scholarships, stipends and UCT's financial aid counts as their biggest source of support. "*I guess I am getting my biggest support through financial aid because I am able to come back each year because they have covered my fees, imagine life without having financial aid I would never be able to pay such amount of money, like there is no other way I will be able to cover this amount except I did get some bursary, but like I think I consider it as my biggest thingy".* This is a general sentiment conveyed by majority of the participants in regard to financial support, as eight out of nine of the participants of this study are first generation university students. Majority of the participants come from working class backgrounds where their parents either dropped out of high school or stopped schooling at grade 12 or even at primary school level. In providing a response to one of the interview questions, one participant mentioned that her grandmother supports her and that she works as a domestic worker: *"ohh, this other day my grandma was working in Rondebosch, she's a domestic worker"*. Another participant's response to her parents schooling history was that "*they [parents] only did primary yeah both of them".*

[29] This is the colloquial abbreviation with which students refer to the extended degree programme, the EDU in place of the EDP stands for the Extended Degree Unit (EDU).

Also, considering that a Bachelor of Arts or Social Science degree at a historically white university such as UCT will cost no less than R49, 440 excluding all other expenses (UCT Fees Handbook 2017: 8). University education has evidently been placed beyond the reach of students from working class backgrounds and as such financial assistance is imperative.

Black students receive financial assistance from a range of support structures which have financial support mechanisms in place. According to one participant, "*financially if you want textbooks, and you really don't have help for textbooks and some other material"* SAEP provides. Another avenue for financial support comes from UCT's financial aid where one participant mentioned that in addition to other living expenses "*we [gonna] get R3700... or R3000 what for a book allowance, I was so excited for financial aid*". Financial aid contributes tremendously towards settling university fees for these participants and to a lesser degree book allowances and living expenses. For this reason, five out of the nine students interviewed for this study supported by UCT's financial aid work part time during the semester in order to supplement the needs not met or covered by financial aid; *"I got uhmm a part job [...] I am tutoring learners from primary and high school from Gugulethu"*. Furthermore, only two of the nine participants interviewed are fully supported by their parents i.e. university fees and expenses; of these two participants, however, one works part time over the weekends to earn money towards his living expenses. Evidently, findings suggest that many black students are faced with a responsibility to balance their time between working to earn money to support themselves and the academic demands that come with being a university student. In some cases, students earn money so as to support their families at home as well: *"I have always had jobs in and outside of this place, uhm for extra cash, for groceries, or to help out at home when there's something needed".* This is undeniably an incredible responsibility for a student with demanding academic obligations, as such examining the relevance and effectiveness of the academic support structures available to black students considering this demanding reality becomes necessary.

- **Academic Support**

Findings showed that students receive what is perceived to be their most relevant academic support from both the SAEP and the HUMEDU. Participants overwhelmingly offered positive remarks about their experiences with these two parties. The stigma associated with being an EDP student aside, participants perceive the HUMEDU as an invaluable resource which they are often grateful for. Sentiments regarding the EDU read similarly to this one offered by one participant: "*You are on the EDU program which is fine because it will stand you a better position when you take those prerequisites to do those courses, you will do better"*. Participants believe that the EDU exist to offer them extra help which they believe there is real need for. One participant commented as follows: *"my understanding is that I am receiving a lot of extra help, extra time within my degree [from EDU] so there's no excuse for failure so I should do well and umm, I just feel grateful"*. Another participant went as far as offering to rate the EDU out of 10: "*I would rank it as a 10 out of 10 because if ever you have a question or anything that is not covered in your normal tut that you have to go to, you can always go to the EDP tut"*. Ultimately, findings suggest that black students believe that the mechanisms in place offered by the HUMEDU are of tremendous use to them, particularly the tutorials and some of the Extended Degree courses. More so, findings further showed that students believe that the EDU exists to prioritize their academic interests by way of paying careful attention to their academic performances and promptly intervening when the need arises. This response by one participant sums up this point: *"EDP is like that mother figure which pulls you to the side not because you have done anything wrong but because she knows you might need it and that you can come to her anytime when you need it*".

Similarly, SAEP offers academic support which participants consider useful, the most commonly cited and seemingly most rewarding academic support according to participants is SAEP's mentorship programme. SAEP's mentorship programme provides students with the opportunity to be paired with a mentor who has considerable amount of social and academic experience in the university. One participant stated that this mentorship opportunity sparked his initial interest in SAEP, he said: *"there are also mentors which are really good, I was attracted to those"*. Mentors primarily helped them with academic demands, however there was also room to speak to their mentors about non-academic issues. Generally, SAEP coordinators dealt with the varied non-academic nature of issues their students encountered at

UCT. Mentors assist with reading and editing assignments, they help with referencing and many other academic related issues: *"He [mentor] would even teach me how to reference in APA format"*.

Evidently, participants receive all sorts of academic support from the mentorship programme which contributes towards excelling at their academics. In addition to the mentorship programme, a factor which is less of an academic support mechanism but rather a characteristic of the SAEP which participants experience as beneficial to their academics is approachability. Participants generally commended the ease with which they are able to approach SAEP for any sort of assistance: "*SAEP is like doing fairly well you know because I like the relationship that me and SAEP have you know just like I keep going there and actually umm I appreciate for me you know"*. There appears to be a certain feeling of ease and familiarity with which all the participants supported by SAEP express how effective they perceive SAEP to be. Findings suggest that this might stem from the long standing relationship SAEP has built with their students from high school. In speaking about her relationship with SAEP, one participant commented that despite being supported by both SAEP and HUMEDU, she frequently sought out assistance from SAEP over the HUMEDU as a result of this factor. A detailed correspondence between this participant (P) and the interviewer (I) on this issue is provided below:

P: I learned to be independent. Also through the help of SAEP I went back and forth asking them, telling them this is not working for me. there was like a point when I was like, no I am not supposed to be here, I made a wrong choice. Just not to be there, just not meant to be there and then they helped me. I remember my mentor used to check my assignments before I handed them in.

I: Your mentor from where? from SAEP?

P: Yeah SAEP and then he would even teach me how to reference in APA format

I: Didn't the EDU/P do anything for you?

P: They [EDU] actually did [help] but I was just like, just out of this thing that was going on. I just didn't like things. I didn't like the system. Like you don't understand [pauses and sighs]. It was just like too much.

I: So much that the EDU also felt like part of the system?

P: Yeah and it felt like part of the hardship, so yeah I guess like my hope that time was relying on SAEP for me to get help.

I: Why did you feel SAEP was the better uhmm...?

P: Because I already know them from high school, I've been with them, they understand me better than whoever I'd go to here and they will help me as much as I want them to. I mean like I couldn't, who could I give my whole assignment to, to check for me in UCT? While there is thingy, there is writing center but I had to book for that and maybe you will only get next week.

This correspondence is provided in extensive detail because it sheds light on a crucial issue as to what structures black students' decisions to seek assistance from one support structure over the other. The findings evidently showed that the issue of preference is linked to familiarity and being comfortable with particular support structures as well as certain time constraints. The perceived shortcomings of the support structures available to students will be discussed next.

- **Shortcomings and Other Forms of Support**

Despite lauding certain support structures as effective, findings showed that participants held certain reservations about some of these same support structures. One such crucial reservation entailed participants expressing that they perceived the EDP as being no different from the university in its culture and its practices. For these participants, it may be argued that the EDU forms part of the challenges of an institutional nature which these participants feel are largely untransformed and constraining at UCT. For one, the detailed correspondence provided above offers significant insight into how black students feel about approaching the EDU, so do remarks like: "*it [EDU] felt like part of the hardship*". According to findings, some of the participants perceive the EDU as being part of the "system" rather than being different from it. Consequently, these sentiments about the EDU held by a few participants suggest that when available academic support is – in this case perceived as - devoid of actively recognizing and addressing institutionalized cultural hegemony, it falls short of being perceived as offering genuine support in the context of structural inequality and [historical] forms of exclusion.

Other criticisms levelled against the EDP were criticisms about time, where participants expressed that: *"honestly for me the two hours [of EDP tutorials] is too long, yea it is too long for us to concentrate like for like 2 hours"* and another participant expressed that being on the EDP feels like being *"given less time and more work so to say, [...] given that time to work under pressure to be able to still produce quality work without time being on our side basically"*. Most strikingly, a participant made this comment regarding the four-year time period required for the EDP degree: *"the intentions [of the EDP] are to help us right but at the same time it makes us extend our years which doesn't really - I don't know how to put this but - we trying to improve our situations as quickly as possible but it makes us to spend more time"*. These perceived shortcoming of the EDP as discussed evidently carry unfavourable implications, most significantly for students who feel discouraged to approach the EDP for assistance, it also compromises the work the EDU sets out to accomplish.

Criticisms of a lesser magnitude were also levelled against SAEP and these criticisms were generally issues pertaining to preference and time management on part of participants rather than shortcomings of SAEP. A couple participants merely relayed that some of their SAEP obligations e.g. regular meetings, monthly reports, meetings with mentors were time consuming. *"I was like do I want a mentor, I ticked no because that's like time consuming. Yeah that's time consuming"*. More significantly, a noteworthy issue was raised by one participant regarding approaching SAEP and the process of proving financial need: *"SAEP, there's monthly reports that you submit and they support you with like a little stipend, [...] there's like stuff you have to do and sometimes you are just like I don't want to do that all the time, keep your money - but not to be rude. It just gets frustrating, you have to go through all these processes with NSFAS, SAEP, with everyone, like for a little more money so sometimes you are just like it is fine sharp I'll just live"*. Evidently, this student feels rather strongly about the constant need to, in some way, prove and perform poverty every time financial support is needed. This is evidently the result of how current commodification practices on higher education exacerbate larger structural arrangements in the country which perpetually place full access to university education beyond the reach of students from poor and working class backgrounds.

Lastly, the least spoken about but mentioned support structure was the Wellness Center. Similar to support structures such as the writing center, majority of the students were aware of the availability of this structure to students, however there was no input regarding participants making use of this support structure in aiding students' abilities to excel at UCT. The Wellness Center offers a host of services to students either free of charge if on UCT's financial aid or at fee depending on the nature of support required. Given that physical and mental health is the priority of this support structure, it holds strong potential for mental, emotional and psychosocial wellbeing which could be of tremendous benefits to students. However, whether as a result of the limitations of this research or other factors, it appears that psycho-social forms of support are not as prominent among these students in comparison to academic and financial forms of support.

5.4. How do black students at a HWU define success and to what extent do current support structures enable their definitions of success?

For this project, success has been defined as referring to the desires, goals and/or outcomes associated with students' understanding of what a university experience can offer. To varying degrees, students further their education beyond schooling in order to achieve several objectives, moreover students hold certain preconceived perceptions as to the nature of the university environment which would allow for the fulfilment of their intended goals. Hence, this sub-research question deals with highlighting the various definitions of success black students hold onto in deciding to pursue a university qualification. Findings from the preceding sub-research question further provide bulk of the answers to the second half of this sub-research question which deals with current support structures, and whether or not they enable students' definitions of success.

The findings strongly showed that for many of the participants, success is framed around a socio economic objective which seeks economic empowerment: *"You've seen the standard of living you've had to go through, so you'll understand what it means to be a poor black*

without education in this country that like on its own forces you to get this education". The dominant narrative around defining success for these black students revolve around ensuring a higher socioeconomic status for themselves and their families. Essentially, the findings showed that participants are interested in obtaining the necessary economic capital which they believe will secure a future different from the poor to working class conditions that they are currently familiar with. There are several complex and intimate factors which propel black students to perceive the benefits of a university education in this way. Firstly, eight out of the nine students interviewed for this study are first generation university students, as mentioned earlier. *"We are the first umm people to go to varsity so they've [family members] been working hard at restaurants and being cashiers and whatever but for me that was like okay they are working hard but there's not much improvement at home so I think maybe getting a degree would help to maybe for me earn better money and we can make more improvements"*. This quote among others highlight that definitions of success for black students are significantly influenced by structural factors which dictate the sort of choices they are able to make. *"Because now instead of thinking about yourself, you think for many people, even if I say UCT is not a kind of place for me I want to go to somewhere else, they will be like Ah! The way they will be disappointed and stuff so that fear of disappointing parents and stuff"*.

Secondly, it appears that for students to believe that a university degree can guarantee such an economic goal, it means that the university is understood to exist to serve the economy rather than an original purpose of being a public good with the objective to bolster critical citizenry (Vally 2007). Although one participant relayed that he *believes "UCT degree offers you that opportunity to have a diverse mind and also to have a mind that's free, that's open to learning, to experience and also that's open to discussion and opinions you know, [...] especially this degree that I'm doing right now [social sciences] you know"*, the overwhelming sentiment around the essence of a university education is one which places more emphasis on an economic return. Despite participants expressing their disappointment and discontentment with the university for several reasons, such as in this case: *"I thought maybe the informing thing about why university was it and nothing else, was because at that time I thought university takes into aspects all of the things, you know, like your intellectual, your social, your political stuff and you get to learn all those things and then you go out there and you apply them in the specific uhmm that you venture into. So I got it all wrong in high school when I thought university was this thing where we change things"*, the findings showed that black students

firmly hold on to the belief that a university degree guarantees their upliftment out of poverty, as the following comment shows. *"We are the first umm people to go to varsity so they've [family members] been working hard at restaurants and being cashiers and whatever but for me that was like okay they are working hard but there's not much improvement at home so I think maybe getting a degree would help to maybe for me earn better money and we can make more improvements"*.

In sum, findings showed that black students set out to accomplish long term goals, their goals represent a commitment to permanently transform their circumstances: *"I need to make sure that after my mother is tired of working she will still get something to eat on the table so that's why"*. Typically, however, support structures arguably offer support which tackle more short-term hurdles, e.g. assistance with coursework, essays and financial support within the period of study among others, which could in turn culminate in enabling students long term goals. Overall, what is most apparent is that black students have placed enormous value on the economic potential of a university degree whereas the degree in itself is seemingly not what is intrinsically valued.

5.5. Summary

In this chapter, I presented the key findings relevant to addressing the main research question for this research study. For a number of reasons, the nature of students' experiences at the HWU, UCT are varied and complex. For one, it was highlighted that language features quite prominently in structuring the constrained nature of academic participation of black students' at UCT. Furthermore, available support structures are overwhelmingly perceived to be generally useful and instrumental, however unintended consequences associated with particular support structures create a different set of challenges for their intended beneficiaries. In addition, success is defined within a logic of upliftment and economic empowerment - predominantly linked to the reality of social inequality in South Africa. The provision of these findings is not a fulfilment of the objectives of this research study as such these findings require synthesization and theorization which will be achieved by way of critical discussion and analysis provided in the following chapter.

6. Significance and Analysis of Findings

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, an analytical discussion of the findings which are valid only for the students who participated in this research study is presented. Through this discussion, the central research question *"What factors contribute to enabling and/or constraining black students' abilities to achieve success at a historically white university?"* is addressed. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the theoretical framework employed in this study will be used to inform this discussion.

An Economic Discourse of Success

According to the findings, black students are not explicitly driven by any particular career interests, skills development goals or prospects linked to merely gaining employment for the sake of it. It appears that for these black students, definitions of success are overwhelming informed and driven by the need to address the economic hardships their families and communities continue to endure as a result of structural inequality. Therefore, these students define success within a social and economic justice frame, where a university degree is believed to confer the economic capital needed to effectively address the social injustices black students and their families are intimately familiar with. The significance of this definition of success is one which supports the perspective that higher education in the 'common sense' of many South Africans is positioned as a panacea for moving out of poverty and a guarantee for upward social mobility. There are a number of factors at play here; firstly, findings show that students recognise that they experience the university as largely exclusionary and untransformed. In this way, culturally and in other ways, the university is currently not a space where these students are able to access its offerings and resources as full participants as a result of its institutional characteristics. Despite this, however, students still firmly believe in the legitimacy of such an institution failing to recognise, as Bourdieu would argue, that these institutions serve as agents of the reproduction of the social inequality these students are looking to counteract.

Secondly, what becomes evident here is that students have subscribed to an ideology of upward social mobility which is congruent with the current system's narratives and expectations about the returns of formal education. A narrative where the national vision on higher education reflects that education is expected to deliver direct economic benefits to the betterment of the

individual and the growth of economic system (Lange, 2012:49; Dyson 2015). Where, the White Paper (1997) on higher education states that higher education exists to "address the development needs of society and to provide the labour market with appropriate high-level skills" (DoE 1991:3 in Lange 2012:47). Similarly, the University of Cape Town places emphasis on producing graduates that are politically and economically influential, both locally and globally (UCT Strategic Framework 2016). When such visions are further marketed by universities, the constructed narrative around the function of higher education becomes solidified as economic return. This stands to further inform students' and/or societal assumptions on what a university qualification symbolizes.

It is therefore arguable that while students arrive at the meaning and significance attached to the benefits of a university education as a result of the reasons discussed above, their lived experiences and socioeconomic realities demand that their perspectives are so intimately tied to such a 'common sense' economic return narrative. As such, although this perspective might represent a gross misrecognition of the nature of institutions of education, these black students are structurally disadvantaged and faced with no alternatives recognised - in the same way as education is - in being the ultimate guarantor of economic capital and hence, upward social mobility. Scholars such as Mamdani (2006), Vally (2007) and Lange (2012) have however cautioned us to the myth of this belief that education in its current form, in the context of the neoliberal capitalist economic system can deliver any sort of economic or social justice. Instead they argue that the current state of higher education which is seen to be increasingly adopting a more commodified and corporatized objective actually deprioritizes genuine commitment towards social justice and equal citizenship for those who are economically marginalized in society. This direction results in neoliberal practices which devalue higher education and is misaligned from a public good education objective where achieving social justice can be something of a possibility.

Misrecognition and Symbolic Violence

Misrecognition occurs when there is a sharp contradiction between the perceived neutral and meritocratic nature of the university and the internal cultural structures and practices prevalent at the university. The reality is that the current structural arrangement of UCT predominantly only leaves room for those who belong to the dominant economic class in South Africa and in turn, those who possess the cultural capital of the same group, to gain full access and successfully

navigate the university. More concretely, the findings for this study showed that an institutionalized system of exclusion is prevalent at this HWU where inclusion and exclusion is consolidated in form of material and cultural access, in which case black students are significantly excluded. In terms of material access, 8 out of the 9 participants are dependent on scholarships or a financial aid scheme for financial support in order to access and remain enrolled at the university. Economic capital arguably remains the most significant form of capital which permits initial access to the university, while also providing the conditions necessary to acquiring the habitus i.e. cultural capital, institutionally recognized within the university. On the other hand, institutionalized cultural practices further jeopardize their academic success, as the dominance of a colonial language of instruction and symbolic underrepresentation on campus continue to preserve an environment where black students are inferiorized and under-served. More so, exclusionary practices in form of Eurocentric forms of teaching and knowledge production further exacerbate these inequities. Consequently, in holding on to the view that university education remains the most legitimate means by which one can secure upward social mobility, these black students misrecognize the contributory role that higher education plays in maintaining the status-quo and deepening inequality. Caught in a predicament, these black students are exposed to symbolic violence concealed in various arbitrary forms of domination and exclusion. As a result of their understanding of success, it can also be argued that their perspectives which validate higher education as the most legitimate means to achieving upward social mobility implicates them as complicit in contributing to the status-quo.

This is however not to say that these choices are not the result of a significant curtailment of self-determination. As it has been shown that structural factors strongly influence the way in which these black students arrive at their definitions of success.

Subjectification, Governmentality and Support Structures

It is evident that factors of an economic nature present several significant obstacles hindering students from gaining a full and successful university experience at this HWU. It is, however, important to understand that there are power dynamics at play here, especially when one considers that these black students are aware of the exclusionary and elitist nature of the university environment, but are still convinced that a university education offers them the best possible opportunity for realizing their goals and objectives. It is plausible to argue that this state of affairs is a glaring example of how power shapes the conditions by which lives can be lived.

There is evidently a significant curtailment of self-determination when black students' are aware that their academic success is significantly jeopardized by current internal structures and practices, but are left with little to no choice but to conform to the common sense ideology where higher education remains the most legitimate means for upward social mobility. Their choices are therefore directed in this regard, especially when the consequences of deviating from the perceived benefits of acquiring a university education is remaining within low socioeconomic status bracket. Therefore, their definitions of success cannot be free of the consideration of human productive capacity also understood in terms of socio-economic empowerment. This interplay between [ideological] power and agency is what Foucault (1982:790) and Gramsci (1986:327) address in terms of subjectification and governmentality. Although, not without recognizing the socioeconomic factors at stake, these black students have submitted to upholding a set of ideals which in turn significantly direct their actions, thereby making them subjects of a particular common sense view propounded by various institutions of society.

A significant erosion of choice is consequently an important subject of discussion at this juncture, and in Foucauldian terms, this is understood as the "government of individualization" - the acting on the actions of individuals who retain the capacity to act otherwise (Li 2007:17; Foucault 1982:778). Beyond the curtailment of self-determination in regards to defining success, the findings of this study also showed that there is an institutional culture in place at the university which does not prioritize students' input and/or voice on issues and developmental strategies that are presumably meant to benefit them. For example, two separate accounts of students expressing this sentiment particularly about the EDP: *"the intentions [of the EDP] are to help us right but at the same time it makes us extend our years which doesn't really - I don't know how to put this but - we trying to improve our situations as quickly as possible but it makes us to spend more time"*. The other participant expressed that*: "because when you start like at UCT they will check your marks and be like uhmm [hand gestures; flipping through papers and making comments/facial expression of doubt/low expectations] - [laughs] You were not so smart sorry, four years, oh you are clever, 3 years. That's how they do it, it is not like they do interviews and I don't know but yeah"*. It is evident that certain institutional practices, particularly in form of support structures, are having adverse effects of a psychosocial nature on students at the university.

Despite the findings which indicated that students find available support structures useful and effective, findings also showed that students feel disempowered by some of the rules and regulations governing their experience of the support. This disempowerment evidently has roots in their alluding to the fact there is a particular disconnect between the support they are offered and their socio-economic realities. Consequently, with regard to the EDP, these students had no say in being positioned as needing support, support which they perceive to be effective and instrumental, nonetheless, they find that this support structure infringes on their agential capacities. Institutional practices which deprioritize students' input and collaboration are further shrouded in a discourse of "recommended rules" and "minimum "requirements" and so on, consolidated in university handbooks, there is little to no room for collaboration between students and the university structures which devise these rules ostensibly for the students. This pattern of governmentality evidently extends beyond academic regulations, to the culture and approaches of intervention programmes and support structures aiming to assist students. This realization calls for the need for support structures to prioritize the input of the students they are catering for so as to mitigate situations where students feel disempowered.

Parity of Participation and Success

A central finding of this research study is that equity of access, positive experiences and outcomes at the university are vastly unequal as institutionalized inequities remain entrenched and pervasive at the university. Nevertheless, black students at UCT continue to confront these challenges with commendable tenacity and grit ignited by the belief in their abilities to achieve their goals and objectives. With the exception of students' perceived effectiveness of some of the available support structures, black students' self-efficacy represents one of the few factors which enable them to achieve success at a HWU such as UCT. Institutional arrangements, policies and practices which systematically exclude black students from meaningful access to university spaces need to be dismantled. As Fraser (2008:21-23) would argue, redress measures within the status-quo i.e. the current institutional setting, will merely keep power relations and the institutionalized hierarchies intact. As such significant systematic efforts to transform the university into a space which is more representative of the needs and the demographic make-up of the population is essential. It cannot be overstated that the conditions which will allow for such a transformation to occur would require the redistribution of material resources so as to dismantle the structural nature of inequality rampant in society.

Within the university, economic, cultural and epistemic forms of access are imperative for success and meaningful inclusion. The debate around the need for redress measures and transformation to extend beyond equity in numbers is not new. In seeking to address institutionalized forms of cultural and epistemic exclusion at the university, a plethora of African scholars have engaged in rigorous debates offering solutions in response to what adequate representation and recognition within the institutions looks like. According to Mbembe (2015), it has to involve a process of dethroning the hegemony of Eurocentric traditions in producing knowledge at the university. In its place epistemic diversity whereby there will be practical implications for the ontological and epistemological approaches undertaken in areas pertaining to research methodology, curriculum content, learning and teaching. As Luckett and Shay (2017) have argued, the current inherited curriculum which is representative only of dominant groups needs to be transformed such that it reflects and affirms the identities of all its students as well as acknowledging various indigenous forms of knowledge production. Addressing this particular injustice of misrecognition would involve legitimating as curriculum knowledge, indigenous resources currently carried in subordinated cultures, languages and lived experiences (Luckett and Shay 2017:20). This is, however, not an exhaustive list of solutions, a congruent and effective solution to realize just recognition will require genuine commitment on part of the university and its structures to collaborate with subjugated voices within the university space where the objective is the manifestation of tangible transformative results.

Finally, dominant institutional culture and practices do not exist without the systems of governance which uphold them. For one, as members of the governing structure at the university, academics are in a position to challenge the hegemonic status-quo and to think in new ways about the university's intellectual project (Collis-Buthelezi 2016:70). More concretely, transformative state policies and an increased public budget for higher education would produce a substantial turn around beneficial to creating the conditions for internal transformation to occur and to ensure that every student has an equal chance to succeed at university. Essentially, as part of achieving parity of participation in addressing (mis) representation, the identification of parties complicit in and liable for these injustices is an important step (Fraser 2008:15). Parity of participation demands that redress measures do not remain rhetorical, instead as important as it is to recognize and give platforms to those who are

fairly treated, it is equally important to pinpoint the institutional mechanisms that ought to be held accountable for tangible change to occur. In the context of this research study, important institutional structures include the university Senate and Council as well as members of the university such as academics who have significant social capital within the university, support structure practitioners who execute and in some cases contribute to devising institutional policies. Ultimately, pioneering leadership in addressing social inequities via public institutions has to come from the state, state action on taking measures to improve the socio-economic realities of black, poor and working class families will act as a catalyst towards sufficiently addressing the unequal power relations evident within university spaces.

6.2. Conclusion, Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The primary objective of this research study was to examine institutional practices and the effects they have on students' achievement of their definitions of success. This objective further necessitated an exploration of how black students understand and define success, particularly those on the Humanities extended degrees programme. As a result of this aforementioned frame, debates of importance such as access, in all its various forms, to and within the university featured as the core content to aid in the effective examination of the subject of study. Evidently, socio-economic background, which recognizes the link between race and class positioning in South Africa, but lends itself more to a class analysis, figured prominently throughout the analysis in this study. As a result, more concrete debates around how factors such as race and gender, singularly or intersectionally, impact students' experiences at the university were significantly underexplored. In the same breath, contemporary debates on decolonization and africanization which are of relevance to discussions about transforming SA's universities were back-grounded. It is argued that these issues deserve separate extensive research where literature and theories on these issues are not supplementary but are instead given full and adequate attention.

Nevertheless, in tandem with the objectives and research questions of this study, the nature of black students' experiences at UCT and the factors which either constrain or enable black students' abilities to succeed this historically white university were uncovered and extensively discussed. At UCT these black students are faced with a complex set of experiences, the bulk of which are challenges. The findings revealed that black students at UCT confront challenges of a financial, academic, cultural and psycho-social nature. They experience both covert and

overt forms of exclusion, and in some cases, exclusionary practices are institutionalized and therefore normalized. For this group of black students, financial challenges and the exclusionary culture they experience at the university, across both social and academic settings, were most significant. However, the availability of support structures such as the HUMEDU, Writing Centre and SAEP, among others, described by students' as effective and instrumental, play a huge role in dealing with some of these aforementioned challenges. Notably, black students' aspirations as well as their experiences within the institution reveal that a complex set of power dynamics are at play, particularly with respect to voice, agency and consent within the institution. Lastly, despite evidence that issues of a psychosocial nature emerged from the findings, this was rarely explored and as such - according to the evidence – students sought little to no help from support structures in addressing challenges of this nature. Perhaps, another shortcoming of this research study then was the failure to probe more adequately about students' psychosocial needs and support. Nevertheless, it was uncovered that support structures such as the Wellness Center and the HUMEDU do offer psychosocial support to students, however, participants provided no input as to their experiences with regard to pyscho-social factors. Research studies committed to examining and drawing urgent attention to issues of mental health and psycho-social support would be of tremendous benefit.

6.3. Key Recommendations

Parity of participation is the goal, and for this to be realized, redress measures must take a transformative approach whereby underlying institutionalized structures - which allow for unequal power relations to flourish - be radically dismantled. I, therefore recommend, as guided by Fraser (2008) that redress measures need to cover these three areas of justice; recognition, representation and redistribution.

i. Representation which seeks the empowerment of black students' agency within the institution and from the structures which support them. This follows that a more collaborative and consultative culture can be forged and encouraged within the university so as to ensure the implementation of support strategies which are more attuned to the diverse make-up and needs of the student body. Essentially, the voices of those marginalized within the university need to be effectively privileged.
ii. Secondly, parity of participation is evidently stifled in this regard as this study has shown that black students study in an environment where they feel that their identities are not institutionally affirmed.

Henceforth, epistemic diversity where pedagogic practices are transformed such that it reflects, values and affirms the identities of all its students is warranted.

iii. Lastly, it is evident that structural inequality continues to fracture access to the university and more so that university tuition fees have become increasingly costly. A redistribution framework which takes into account these current realities and addresses financial exclusion as an issue of structural inequality needs to be implemented. Therefore, I argue that higher education needs to be conceptualized as a public good where free [state funded] higher education (Vally 2016) is the goal. This will serve to effectively undermine the current practice where university education is the preserve of an elite few.

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Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to voluntarily join a research study conducted by Michelle A Adebulehin which aims to examine factors that enable and constrain students' abilities to achieve success at the University of Cape Town (UCT). With this study I hope to gain insight into the experiences of students on UCT's Humanities Extended Degree Programme. Through this I hope to collect and analyse data which will inform the projects and practices of both the Humanities Extended Degree Unit (HUM EDU) and the South African Education and Environment Project (SAEP) in order to positively transform the encounters students have with the university.

SAEP and HUMEDU are equal partners in this research project and they provide considerable amount of support to ensure the success and completion of this research project. If you decide to participate, the data collected from you will also be made available to these parties. However, I can guarantee confidentiality in regard to the information you have shared, I will take measures to ensure that the data provided will not be easily traced back to any particular participant, this will be achieved by using pseudonyms and ensuring anonymity in all cases.

This study is not intended to be harmful or significantly tasking, I intend to engage with participants through an open and mutually benefitting semi-structured audio recorded interview on the subject of your experiences at university and your expectations thereof. Nevertheless, I anticipate that several questions which will deal with personal experiences as linked to socioeconomic realities and academic challenges might trigger uncomfortable feelings and as such will need to be addressed sensitively. More so, I will like to assure you that this research project does not intend to bring about any physical or psychological harm to any participant.

Lastly, your rights as a voluntary participant remain tantamount to this research process, you have the right to decline to participate or to leave at any time. You have the right to confidentiality and anonymity and you have the right to request to receive the data collected from you for purposes of validation. I hope that you will consider this research project important and will for this reason decide to participate.

This research project is supervised by **A/Prof. Kathy Luckett and Dr Shannon Morreira.**

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Project: **Examining Institutional Practices and their Effects on Student Success**

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet.	□
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	□
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	□
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	□
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymity etc.) to me.	□
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	□
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	□
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	□
9.	Select only **one** of the following:	□

	• I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. • I do not want my name used in this project.	□
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	□

Participant:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Researcher:

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

Appendix C

Semi-structured Interview Guide

- Bio-data

1. Name of participant
2. Language: home language and other languages spoken (in your community)
3. Primary and Secondary School
4. Educational background of family members
5. Financial support

- Opinions on the current state of the university

1. Why and how did you choose UCT?
2. How much of UCT's history do you know and what exactly about the history do you know?
3. Based on your knowledge of UCT's history as well as its present status, what, in your opinion do you believe a degree from UCT is able to give you?
4. How achievable do you think these prospects are? Why? Why not?
5. What issues do you think stand in the way of achieving this goal?
6. What in your opinion has UCT been able to offer you as a student to ensure the realisation of these goals and an overall positive experience at the university?
7. In your opinion, has the university failed you? If yes, in what ways?

- Support Structures

1. Where do you get your biggest support from?
2. Why do you consider this your biggest support?
3. Are there any challenges you face as a student that are not given enough attention? What are these challenges?
4. How supported do you feel as an EDP student?
5. Based on your experiences so far, would you say that the HUM EDP is instrumental in contributing to good academic performances?

6. In your own words, what does being an EDP student mean?
7. In your own words, what improvements need to be made to the HUM EDP?
8. Lastly, how involved and knowledgeable are your parents/guardians/relatives about your experiences as well as your academic demands and commitments here at UCT?

- <u>On Success, Power and Agency</u>
    1. Did you choose to come to university? Why?
    2. What factors influenced your decision to pursue a university education?
    3. Are there other options you would have chosen over coming to university?
    4. In weighing those other options, what is it that a university education/degree can do for you that the other options cannot?

Appendix D

NVIVO NODES TABLE

Name	Sources	References	Created On
Experience of the nature of the university	8	65	2017/03/22 09:50 AM
Academic Demands	4	8	2017/04/04 07:25 PM
Cultural and Academic Capital	6	14	2017/03/23 11:01 AM
Experiential dissonance	6	11	2017/03/30 11:21 AM
Gender	1	3	2017/03/30 02:29 PM
Positive	1	1	2017/04/04 07:52 PM
Prestige and Capital	4	7	2017/03/23 10:50 AM
Interventions and Support Mechanisms	7	60	2017/03/22 11:15 AM
Helpful	7	42	2017/03/22 11:15 AM
Stigma	3	8	2017/03/22 02:36 PM
Unhelpful	5	14	2017/03/22 11:15 AM
Not Free will or Free Choice	2	3	2017/03/30 02:26 PM
Non-university related aspirations	2	3	2017/03/22 10:25 AM
Social and Cultural Factors	8	59	2017/03/22 09:28 AM
Agency	6	17	2017/03/22 09:30 AM
Constraining	7	38	2017/03/22 09:29 AM
Enabling	1	1	2017/03/22 09:29 AM
Financial constraints	2	3	2017/03/22 10:07 AM
Social or Political Agency	2	9	2017/03/30 11:07 AM
Structural Factors - Current and Historical	8	60	2017/03/22 09:19 AM
Agency	5	15	2017/03/22 09:30 AM

Constraining	7	40	2017/03/22 09:29 AM
Enabling	5	10	2017/03/22 09:29 AM
Financial constraints	7	28	2017/03/22 10:07 AM
The Essence of a University Degree	8	41	2017/03/22 09:38 AM
Combination	1	1	2017/04/04 07:58 PM
Deviates from institutional and governmental discourse	7	17	2017/03/22 10:29 AM
In line with institutional and governmental discourse	6	15	2017/03/22 10:29 AM
constraining	1	1	2017/03/27 08:34 PM
other expectations	2	3	2017/03/27 08:33 PM
Thriving	7	18	2017/03/23 09:15 AM
Deficiency discourse (debunked)	7	18	2017/03/23 09:16 AM
Thriving mechanisms	3	4	2017/04/04 07:14 PM
Transitioning & Adjusting	6	13	2017/03/22 11:13 AM